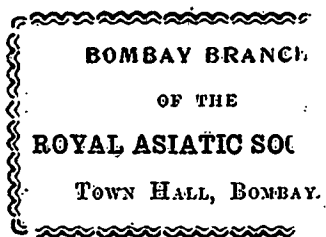




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FINAL MEMORIALS  
OF  
CHARLES LAMB.

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CHAPTER I.

THE LONDON MAGAZINE—CHARACTER AND FATE OF MR. JOHN SCOTT,  
ITS EDITOR—CHARACTER AND HISTORY OF MR. THOMAS GRIFFITHS  
WAINWRIGHT, ONE OF ITS CONTRIBUTORS—MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS  
OF LAMB TO WORDSWORTH, COLERIDGE, AND OTHERS ;—1813  
TO 1825.

LAMB's association with Hazlitt in the year 1820 introduced him to that of the "London Magazine," which supplied the finest stimulus his intellect had ever received, and induced the composition of the Essays fondly and familiarly known under the fantastic title of *Elia*. Never was a periodical work commenced with happier auspices, numbering a list of contributors more original in thought.

more fresh in spirit, more sportive in fancy, or directed by ~~any~~ editor better qualified by nature and study to preside, than this "London." There was Lamb, with humanity ripened among town-bred experiences, and pathos matured by sorrow, at his wisest, sagest, airiest, indiscreetest, best; Barry Cornwall, in the first bloom of his modest and enduring fame, streaking the darkest passion with beauty; John Hamilton Reynolds, lighting up the wildest eccentricities and most striking features of many-coloured life with vivid fancy; and, with others of less note, Hazlitt, whose pen unloosed from the chain which earnest thought and metaphysical dreamings had woven, gave radiant expression to the results of the solitary musings of many years. Over these contributors John Scott presided, himself a critic of remarkable candour, eloquence, and discrimination, unfettered by the dogmas of contending schools of poetry and art; apt to discern the good and beautiful in all; and having, as editor, that which Kent recognised in Lear, which subjects revere in kings, and boys admire in schoolmasters, and contributors should welcome in editors—*authority*;—not manifested in a worrying, teasing, intolerable inter-

ference in small matters, but in a judicious and steady superintendence of the whole; with a wise allowance of the occasional excesses of wit and genius. In this respect, Mr. Scott differed entirely from a celebrated poet, who was induced, just a year after, to undertake the Editorship of the "New Monthly Magazine," an office for which, it may be said, with all veneration for his poetic genius, he was the most unfit person who could be found in the wide world of letters—who regarded a magazine as if it were a long affidavit, or a short answer in Chancery, in which the absolute truth of every sentiment and the propriety of every jest were verified by the editor's oath or solemn affirmation; who stopped the press for a week at a comma; balanced contending epithets for a fortnight; and, at last, grew rash in despair, and tossed the nearest, and often the worst article, "unwhipped of justice," to the impatient printer. Mr. Scott, indeed, was more fit to preside over a little commonwealth of authors than to hold a despotic rule over subject contributors; he had not the airy grace of Jeffrey by which he might give a certain familiar liveliness to the most laborious disquisitions, and shed the glancing light of fancy

among party manifestoes ;—nor the boisterous vigour of Wilson, riotous in power, reckless in wisdom, fusing the production of various intellects into one brilliant reflexion of his own master-mind ;—and it was well that he wanted these weapons of a tyranny which his chief contributors were too original and too sturdy to endure. He heartily enjoyed his position ; duly appreciated his contributors and himself ; and when he gave audience to some young aspirant for periodical honours at a late breakfast, amidst the luxurious confusion of newspapers, reviews, and uncut novels, lying about in fascinating litter, and carelessly enunciated schemes for bright successions of essays, he seemed destined for many years of that happy excitement in which thought perpetually glows into unruffled but energetic language, and is assured by the echoes of the world.

Alas ! a few days after he thus appeared the object of admiration and envy to a young visitor, in his rooms in York-street, he was stretched on a bed of mental agony—the foolish victim of the guilty custom of a world which would have laughed at him for regarding himself as within the sphere of its opinion, if he had not died to

shame it ! In a luckless hour, instead of seeking to oppose the bitter personalities of "Blackwood" by the exhibition of a serener power, he rushed with spurious chivalry into a personal contest ; caught up the weapons which he had himself denounced, and sought to unmask his opponents and draw them beyond the pale of literary courtesy ; placed himself thus in a doubtful position in which he could neither consistently reject an appeal to the conventional arbitrament of violence nor embrace it ; lost his most legitimate opportunity of daring the unhallowed strife, and found another with an antagonist connected with the quarrel only by too zealous a friendship ; and, at last, met his death almost by lamentable accident, in the uncertain glimmer of moonlight, from the hand of one who went out resolved not to harm him ! Such was the melancholy result—first of a controversy too envenomed—and afterwards of enthrallment in usages, absurd in all, but most absurd when applied by a literary man to a literary quarrel. Apart from higher considerations, it may befit a life destined for the listless excesses of gaiety to be cast on an idle brawl ;—"a youth of folly, an old age of cards" may be no great

sacrifice to preserve the hollow truce of fashionable society ; but for men of thought—whose minds are their possession, and who seek to live in the minds of others by sympathy with their thoughts—for *them* to hazard a thoughtful being because they dare not own that they prefer life to death—contemplation to the grave—the preparation for eternity, for the unbidden entrance on its terrors, would be ridiculous if it did not become tragical. “ Sir, I am a metaphysician ! ” said Hazlitt once, when in a fierce dispute respecting the colours of Holbein and Vandyke, words almost became things ; “ and nothing makes an impression upon me but abstract ideas ; ” and woeful, indeed, is the mockery when thinkers condescend to be duellists !

The Magazine did not perish with its Editor ; though its unity of purpose was lost, it was still rich in essays of surpassing individual merit ; among which the masterly vindication of the true dramatic style by Darley ; the articles of Cary, the admirable translator of Dante ; and the “ Confessions of an English Opium Eater ; ” held a distinguished place. Mr. De Quincy, whose youth had been inspired by enthusiastic admiration of Coleridge, shown in contributions to

“The Friend,” not unworthy of his master, and substantial contributions of the blessings of fortune, came up to London, and found an admiring welcome from Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, the publishers into whose hands the “London Magazine” had passed. After the good old fashion of the GREAT TRADE, these genial booksellers used to assemble their contributors round their hospitable table in Fleet Street, where Mr. De Quincy was introduced to his new allies. Among the contributors who partook of their professional festivities, was a gentleman whose subsequent career has invested the recollection of his appearances in the familiarity of social life with fearful interest—Mr. Thomas Griffiths Wainwright. He was then a young man; on the bright side of thirty; with a sort of undress military air, and the conversation of a smart, lively, clever, heartless, voluptuous coxcomb. It was whispered that he had been an officer in the Dragoons; had spent more than one fortune; and he now condescended to take a part in periodical literature, with the careless grace of an amateur who felt himself above it. He was an artist also; sketched boldly and graphically; exhibited a portfolio of his own drawings of female

beauty, in which the voluptuous trembled on the borders of the indelicate; and seized on the critical department of the Fine Arts, both in and out of the Magazine, undisturbed by the presence or pretensions of the finest critic on Art who ever wrote—William Hazlitt. On this subject, he composed, for the Magazine, under the signature of “Janus Weathercock,” articles of flashy assumption—in which disdainful notices of living artists were set off by fascinating references to the personal appearance, accomplishments, and luxurious appliances of the writer, ever the first hero of his essay. He created a new sensation in the sedate circle, not only by his braided surtouts, jewelled fingers, and various neck-handkerchiefs, but by ostentatious contempt for everything in the world but elegant enjoyment. Lamb, who delighted to find sympathy in dissimilitude, fancied that he really liked him; took, as he ever did, the genial side of character; and, instead of disliking the rake in the critic, thought it pleasant to detect so much taste and good-nature in a fashionable *roué*; and regarded all his vapid gaiety, which to severer observers looked like impertinence, as the playful effusion of a remarkably guileless nature. Thus,

when expatiating in his list of choicest friends, in Elia's letter to Southey, he reckons "W—— the light, and warm-as-light hearted, 'Janus' of the 'London;'" and two years afterwards, adverting to the decline of the Magazine, in a letter to Mr. Barton, he persists in his belief of Wainwright's light-heartedness as pertinaciously as all the half-conscious dupes in Othello 'do in the assertion of Iago's honesty: "They have pulled down Hazlitt, P——, and their best stay, kind, light-hearted, W——, their 'Janus.'" In elucidation of this apparent lightness of heart, it will not be uninteresting to trace the remainder of this extraordinary person's history; for surely no contrast presented by the wildest romance between a gay cavalier, fascinating Naples or Palermo, and the same hero, detected as the bandit or demon of the forest, equals that which time has unveiled between what Mr. Wainwright *seemed*, and what *he was*.

Mr. Wainwright having ceased to contribute to the "London" about the year 1825, when Lamb bestowed on him his parting eulogium, was scarcely seen in our literary circle, though he retained the acquaintance and regard of some of its members. In the year 1830 he was residing at

Linden House, Turnham Green, in the possession of which he had succeeded his uncle, Dr. Griffiths, who for many years edited a monthly publication, and whose death had occurred about a year before, after a short illness, while Mr. Wainwright and his wife were visiting at his house on the occasion of her confinement with her only child. He acquired some property at the death of his uncle, by whose bounty, being early left an orphan, he had been educated ; but his expensive tastes soon brought him to severe pecuniary embarrassments and the verge of ruin. His wife's mother, who had died in Linden House after a short illness, left two daughters by Mr. Abercrombie her second husband, named Helen Frances Phœbe, and Madeline ; Mrs. Wainwright being the daughter of a former husband named Ward. These young ladies being left without provision, except a pension of 10*l.* a year each which had been granted to them, as the destitute daughters of a meritorious officer, by the Board of Ordnance, were invited by Mr. Wainwright to visit him at Linden House ; and, at the beginning of 1830, with his wife and child formed his family.

About this time, he formed the remarkable

scheme of procuring the eldest of the young ladies to effect insurances on her life to the amount of many thousands of pounds for the period of three, or two years. Miss Helen Frances Phoebe Abercrombie was then a lovely woman nearly of the age of twenty-one, which she attained 12th of March, 1830; without expectations, except of some trifling possibility under a settlement; and, except the proceeds of the pension, without a shilling in the world; while Mr. Wainwright, who supplied the funds for this strange speculation, was in reality still poorer, being steeped in debt, impatient of privation, with ruin daily contracting its circle around him.

The first proposal was made by Mr. Wainwright, on behalf of Miss Abercrombie, to the Palladium Insurance Office, on 28th March, for 3,000*l.* for three years. On this occasion, Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright and Miss Abercrombie called together at the office, where the object of the insurance was stated to be to enable them to recover some property to which the young lady was entitled. This proposal was accepted, and on the 20th of April completed by payment of the premium for one year by the hand of Miss Abercrombie, then attended only by Mrs. Wainwright, and the

delivery of the policy. On or about the same day, a similar insurance was effected with the Eagle Insurance Office for 3,000*l.*, for the term of two years, and the premium for one year and stamp duty were paid by Miss Abercrombie, in her sister's presence. In the following October, four more policies were effected ; with the Provident for 2,000*l.*; with the Hope for 2,000*l.*; with the Imperial for 3,000*l.*; and with the Pelican for 5,000*l.*—each on the life of Miss Abercrombie, and each for the period of two years; so that, at the close of this month of October, the life of this poor girl, described by the actuary of the Provident as “a remarkably healthy, cheerful, beautiful, young woman, whose life was one of a thousand,” was insured to the amount of 18,000*l.*, as to 3,000*l.* for three years, and for the residue for two years only. Premiums for one year, amounting, with the stamps, to something more than 220*l.* had been paid; the premiums which would be required to keep the policies on foot for a second year amounting to 200*l.*, and in the event of her surviving the brief terms of insurance, the whole money would be lost. On every visit to the offices, Miss Abercrombie was accompanied by Mrs. Wainwright; and

the appearance of these two ladies together on such an errand sometimes awakened scruples which the apparent desirableness of the life for insurance to an office did not always silence. At the Imperial it was suggested to Miss Abercrombie, by Mr. Ingall, the actuary, that "as she only proposed to make the insurance for two years, he presumed it was to secure some property she would come into at the expiration of that time;" to which Mrs. Wainwright replied: "Not exactly so; it is to secure a sum of money to her sister, which she will be enabled to do by other means if she outlives that time; but I don't know much of her affairs; you had better speak to her about it."—On which Miss Abercrombie said, "That is the case." By what means the ladies were induced to make these statements can scarcely ever be guessed; it is certain that they were illusory; no reason existed for the poor penniless girl securing 3,000*l.* for her sister in case of her own death within two years; nor was there the least chance of her receiving such a sum if living at the end of that period.

The sum of 18,000*l.* did not bound the limits of the speculation; for, in the same month of October,

a proposal to the Eagle to increase the insurance by the addition of 2,000*l.* was made and declined ; and a proposal to the Globe for 5,000*l.*, and a proposal to the Alliance for some further sum, met a similar fate. At the office of the Globe, Miss Abercrombie, who, as usual, was accompanied by Mrs. Wainwright, being asked the object of the insurance, replied that "she scarcely knew ; but she was desired to come there by her friends, who wished the insurance done." On being further pressed, she referred to Mrs. Wainwright, who said, "It is for some money matters that are to be arranged ; but ladies don't know much about such things ;" and Miss Abercrombie answered a question, whether she was insured in any other office, in the negative. At the Alliance, Helen was more severely tested by the considerate kindness of Mr. Hamilton, who received the proposal, and who was not satisfied by her statement that a suit was depending in Chancery, which would probably terminate in her favour, but that if she should die in the interim, the property would go into another family, for which contingency she wished to provide. The young lady, a little irritated at the question, said, "I supposed that what you had to

inquire into was the state of my health, not the object for the insurance;" on which he informed her "that a young lady, such as she was, had come to the office two years before to effect an insurance for a short time; and that it was the opinion of the Company she had come to her death by unfair means." Poor Helen replied, "she was sure there was no one about her who could have any such object." Mr. Hamilton said, "Of course not;" but added, "that he was not satisfied as to the object of the insurance; and unless she stated in writing what it was, and the Directors approved it, the proposal could not be entertained." The ladies retired; and the office heard no more of the proposal, nor of Miss Abercrombie, till they heard that she was dead, and that the payment of other policies on her life was resisted.

Mr. Wainwright's affairs soon approached a crisis, for he had given a warrant of attorney in August, and a bill of sale of his furniture at Linden House, both of which were become absolute, and seizure under which he had postponed only till the 20th or 21st of December. Early in that month he left Linden House, and took furnished lodgings in Conduit Street, to which he

was accompanied by his wife and her two half-sisters. On the 13th of that month Miss Abercrombie called on a solicitor named Lys, to whom she was a stranger, and requested him to attest the execution of a will she desired to make, as she was going abroad ; he complied, and she executed a will in favour of her sister Madeline, making Mr. Wainwright its executor. On the 14th, having obtained a form of assignment from the office of the Palladium, she called on another solicitor named Kirk, to whom she was also a stranger, to perfect for her an assignment of the policy of that office to Mr. Wainwright ; this the solicitor did by writing in ink over words pencilled in the hand-writing of Mr. Wainwright, and witnessing her signature. On that evening, Miss Abercrombie accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright and her sister to the play, as she had done the preceding evening, and partook of oysters, or lobsters, and porter, after their return. The weather was wet ; she had walked home, as she had done the evening before ; and in the night suffered from illness, which was attributed to cold. She continued ill, however, and, in a day or two, Dr. Locock was called in by Mr. Wainwright,

found her labouring under derangement of stomach, and prescribed for her simple remedies. She continued indisposed, but he entertained no serious apprehensions until he was sent for on the 21st, when she died. On that morning a powder which Dr. Locock did not recollect ever prescribing, was administered to her in jelly, and Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright quitted her, to take a long walk for some hours. Soon after their departure she was seized with violent convulsions; the physician was sent for, and was shocked by her condition, and by her exclaiming, "Oh, Doctor, these are the pains of death!" He administered proper remedies for pressure on the brain, under which she was then labouring; the symptoms subsided; and he left her in a state of composure. The convulsions, however, soon returned with increased violence; the attendant in alarm called in the assistant of a neighbouring apothecary in the emergency; the young man did for her the best that human skill could devise, but all assistance was in vain, and before Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright returned from their walk, she was dead. An examination of the body took place, with Mr. Wainwright's ready concurrence, which, in Doctor

Locock's apprehension, left no reason to attribute the death to other than natural causes ; its immediate cause was obviously pressure on the brain ; and the sums, amounting to 18,000*l.*, insured on her life, became payable to Mr. Wainwright as her executor, though, except as to two of the policies—those of the Palladium and the Hope, which had been assigned to him by poor Helen—apparently, at least, for the benefit of the sister.

Suspicion, however, was excited ; the offices resisted the claim ; Mr. Wainwright left England for France, where he spent several years ; and after delays, occasioned chiefly by proceedings in Equity, the question of the validity of the policies was tried, before Lord Abinger, on the 29th of June, 1835, in an action by Mr. Wainwright, as executor of Miss Abercrombie, on the Imperial's policy. Extraordinary as were the circumstances under which the defence was made, it rested on a narrow basis—on the allegation that the insurance was not, as it professed to be, that of Miss Abercrombie, for her own benefit, but the insurance of Mr. Wainwright, effected at his cost, for some purpose of his own, and on the falsehood of representations she had been induced to make in reply

to inquiries as to insurances in other offices. The cause of her death, if the insurance was really hers, was immaterial ; and though surely not immaterial in the consideration of the question, whether the insurance was hers or Mr. Wainwright's, was thrown out of the case by Lord Abinger. That accomplished judge, who had been the most consummate advocate of his time, disposed always to pleasurable associations, shrunk, in a Civil Court, from inquiries which, if they had been directly presented on a criminal charge, would have compelled his serious attention ; stated that there was no evidence of other crime than fraud ; and intimated that the defence had been injured by a darker suggestion. The jury, partaking of the judge's disinclination to attribute the most dreadful guilt to a plaintiff on a *Nisi Prius* record, and, perhaps, scarcely perceiving how they could discover for the imputed fraud an intelligible motive without it, were unable to agree, and were discharged without giving a verdict. The cause was tried again before the same judge, on the 3rd December following ;—when the counsel for the defence, following the obvious inclination of the Bench, avoided the most fearful charge, and obtained a verdict for the

Office, without hesitation, sanctioned by Lord Abinger's proffered approval to the jury.

In the meantime, Mr. Wainwright, leaving his wife and child in London, had acquired the confidence and enjoyed the hospitality of the family of an English officer, residing at Boulogne. While he was thus associated, a proposal was made to the Pelican Office to insure the life of his host for 5,000*l.*;—which, as the medical inquiries were satisfactorily answered, was accepted. The Office, however, received only one premium; for the life survived the completion of the insurance only a few months; falling after a very short illness. Under what circumstances Mr. Wainwright left Boulogne after this event is unknown; he became a wanderer in France; and being brought under the notice of the Correctional Police, as passing under a feigned name, was arrested. In his possession was found the vegetable poison called strychnyne—which leaves little trace of its passage in the frame of its victim—and which, though unconnected with any specific charge, increased his liability to temporary restraint, and led to a six months' incarceration at Paris. After his release, he ventured to re-visit London; where, in June, 1837, soon after his arrival,

he was met in the street by Forester, the police officer, who had identified him in France, and was committed for trial on a charge of forgery.

The offence for which Mr. Wainwright was thus apprehended was not very heinous of its kind; but his guilt was clear, and the punishment, at that time, capital. It consisted in the forgery of the names of his own trustees to five successive powers of attorney to sell out stock settled on himself and his wife upon their marriage, which his exigencies from time to time had tempted him thus to realise. The Bank of England, by whom he was prosecuted, consented to forego the capital charges on his pleading guilty to the minor offence of uttering in two of the cases, which he did at the Old Bailey sessions of July, 1837, and received sentence of transportation for life. In the meantime, proceedings were taken on behalf of Miss Abercrombie's sister, Madeline, who had married a respectable bookseller named Wheatley, to render the insurances available for her benefit, which induced the prisoner to offer communications to the Insurance Offices which might defeat a purpose entirely foreign to his own; and which he hoped might procure him, through their intercession, a

mitigation of the most painful severities incident to his sentence. In this expectation he was miserably disappointed ; for though, in pursuance of their promise, the Directors of one of the Offices made a communication to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the result, instead of a mitigation, was an order to place him in irons, and to send him to his place of punishment in a vessel about to convey three hundred convicts. Thus terminated the European career of the "kind and light-hearted Janus !"

The time has not arrived for exhibiting all the traits of this remarkable person ; probably before it shall arrive, the means of disclosing them will be lost, or the subject forgotten ; but enough may be found disclosed in the public proceedings from which we have taken thus far our narrative, to supply an instructive contrast between his outer and inner life, and yet more instructive indications of the qualities which formed the links of connection between them. The defect in his moral nature consisted perhaps chiefly in morbid self-esteem, so excessive as to overwhelm all counter-vailing feelings, and to render all the interests

of others, all duties, all sympathies, all regards, subservient to the lightest efforts, or wishes, or enjoyments of the wretched idol. His tastes appreciated only the most superficial beauty; his vanities were the poorest and most empty; yet he fancied himself akin to greatness; and in one of his communications from Newgate, in his last hours of hope, he claimed for himself “a soul whose nutriment is love, and its offspring art, music, divine song, and still holier philosophy.” When writing from the hold of the convict-ship, to complain of his being placed in irons, he said—“They think me a desperado. Me! the companion of poets, philosophers, artists, and musicians, a desperado! You will smile at this,—no—I think you will *feel* for the man, educated and reared as a gentleman, now the mate of vulgar ruffians and country bumpkins.” This shallow notion of being always “a gentleman,”—one abstracted ever from conventional vulgarities—seems to have given him support in the extremity of wretchedness and infamy: the miserable reed he leaned on; not the ruling passion—but the ruling folly. “They pay me respect here, I assure you,” said he to an acquaintance who visited him in Newgate; “they think I am

here for 10,000*l.*;" and on some of the convicts coming into the yard with brooms to perform their compulsory labour of sweeping it, he raised himself up, pulled down his soiled wristbands, and exclaimed, with a faint hilarity :—" You see those people; they are convicts like me ;—but no one dares offer me the broom !" Circumstances were indeed changed, but the *man* was the same as when he elaborated artistic articles for the " London." \*

\* It may not be uninteresting, nor wholly uninteresting, to place in contrast with this person's deplorable condition, a specimen of his composition when " topping the part " of a literary coxcomb. The following is a portion of an article under the head of " Sentimentalities on the Fine Arts ; by Janus Weathercock, Esq. To be continued, when he is in the humour ; " published in the London Magazine for March, 1820.

" I (Janus) had made a tolerable dinner the other day at George's, and with my mind full of my last article, was holding up a *petit verre d'eau de vie de Dantzic* to the waxen candle ; watching with scient eye the number of aureate particles—some swimming, some sinking quiveringly, through the oily and luscious liquor, as if informed with life, and gleaming like golden fish in the Whang-ho, or Yellow River (which, by the way, is only yellow from its mud) : so was I employed, when suddenly I heard the day of the month (the 15th), ejaculated in the next box. This at once brought me back from my delicious reverie to a sense of duty. ' Contributions must be forwarded by the 18th, at the very latest,' were the Editor's last words to Janus, and he is incapable of forgetting them. I felt my vigorous personal identity instantly annihilated, and resolved, by some mystic process, into a part of that unimaginable plurality in

To the last he seemed to be undisturbed by remorse; shocked only at the indignities of the penal condition of one imbued with tastes so

unity, wherewithal Editors, Reviewers, and, at present, pretty commonly, Authors, clothe themselves, when, seated on the top-mast tip of their top-gallant masts,—they pour forth their oracular dicta on the groaning ocean of London spread out huge at their feet. Forthwith, We (Janus) sneaked home alone—poked in the top of our hollow fire, which spouted out a myriad of flames, roaring pleasantly, as chasing one another, they rapidly escaped up the chimney—exchanged our smart, tight-waisted, stiff-collared coat, for an easy chintz gown, with pink ribbons—lighted our new, elegantly-gift French lamp, having a ground-glass globe, painted with gay flowers and gaudy butterflies, hauled forth *Portfolio* No. 9, and established ourselves cosily on a Grecian couch! Then we (Janus) stroked our favourite tortoise-shell cat into a full and sonorous *purr*; and after that our nurse, or maid-servant, a good-natured, Venetian-shaped girl, (having first placed on the table a genuine flask of as rich Montepulciano as ever voyaged from fair Italia), had gently, but firmly, closed the door, carefully rendered air-tight by a gilt-leather binding, (it is quite right to be particular) we indulged ourselves in a complacent consideration of the rather elegant figure we made, as seen in a large glass placed opposite our chimney-mirror, without however, moving any limb, except the left arm, which instinctively filled out a full cut-glass of the liquor before us, while the right rested inactively on the head of puss!

“It was a sight that turned all our gall into blood! Fancy, comfortable reader! Imprimis, a very good-sized room. Item: A gay Brussels carpet covered with garlands of flowers. Item: A fine *original* cast of the Venus de Medicis. Item: Some choice volumes, in still more choice old French *moroquin*, with water-tabby silk linings. Item: Some more vols. coated by the skill of

refined, that all causes ought to give way to their indulgence. This vanity, nurtured by selfishness, and unchecked by religion, became a disease, perhaps amounting to *monomania*, and yielding one lesson to repay the world for his existence;—that there is no state of the soul so

Roger Payne, and ‘*our Charles Lewis.*’ Item : A piano, by Tomkinson. Item : A Danaseus sabre. Item : One cat. Item : A large Newfoundland dog, friendly to the cat. Item : A few hot-house plants on a white marble slab. Item : A delicious, melting love-painting, by Fuseli ; and last, not least, in our dear love, *we*, myself (Janus !) Each, and the whole, seen by the Correggio-kind of light, breathed, as it were, through the painted glass of the lamp !!!

“Soothed into that amiable sort of self-satisfaction so necessary to the bodying out those deliciously voluptuous ideas, perfumed with languor, which occasionally swim and undulate like gauzy clouds, over the brain of the most cold-blooded men, we put forth our hand to the folio, which leant against a chair by the sofa’s side, and at hap-hazard extracted thence—

“Lancret’s charming ‘*Repas Italien.*’ *T. P. le Bas, Sculp.*

“‘A summer party in the greenwood shade,  
With lutes prepared, and cloth on herbage laid ;  
And ladies’ laughter coming through the air.’

“*L. Hunt’s ‘Rimini.’*

“This completed the charm. We immersed a well-seasoned, prime pen into our silver inkstand three times, shaking off the loose ink again lingeringly, while, holding the print fast in our left hand, we perused it with half-shut eyes, dallying awhile with car delight.”

dangerous as that in which the vices of the sensualist are envenomed by the grovelling intellect of the scorner.

In 1819, Mr. Wordsworth, encouraged by the extending circle of his earnest admirers, announced for publication his "Peter Bell"—a poem written in the first enthusiasm of his system, and exemplifying, amidst beauty and pathos of the finest essence, some of its most startling peculiarities. Some wicked jester, gifted with more ingenuity and boldness than wit, anticipated the real "Simon Pure," by a false one, burlesquing some of the characteristics of the poet's homeliest style. This grave hoax produced the following letter from Lamb, appropriately written in alternate lines of red and black ink, till the last sentence, in which the colours are alternated, word by word—even to the signature—and "Mary's love," at the close; so that "Mary" is *black*, and her "love" *red*.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I received a copy of "Peter Bell" a week ago, and I hope the author will not be offended if I say I do not much relish it. The humour, if it is meant for humour, is forced; and then the price!—sixpence would have been dear for it. Mind I do not mean *your* "Peter Bell," but a "Peter Bell," which preceded it about a week, and is in every bookseller's shop window in London, the type and paper nothing differing from the true one, the preface signed W. W., and the supplementary preface quoting as the author's words an extract from the supplementary preface to the "Lyrical Ballads." Is there no law against these rascals? I would have this Lambert Simmel whipt at the cart's tail. Who started the spurious "P. B." I have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering —; but I have heard no name mentioned. "Peter Bell" (not the mock one) is excellent. For its matter I mean. I cannot say that the style of it satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors to whom it is feigned to be

told, do not *arride me*. I had rather it had been told me, the reader, at once. "Hartleap Well" is the tale for me; in matter as good as this, in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add "The Waggoner?"—Have I thanked you, though, yet, for "Peter Bell?" I would not *not have it* for a good deal of money. C—— is very foolish to scribble about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say anything to him about it. He would only begin a very long story with a very long face, and I see him far too seldom to tease him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He never comes near our house, and when we go to see him he is generally writing, or thinking: he is writing in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away. The mock "P. B." had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find something diverting in it, I reached your two books off the shelf, and set into a steady reading of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed. The two of your last edition, of course, I mean. And in the morning I awoke determining to take down the "Excursion."

I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond, and fishing up a dead author, whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary BELLS. There is no Cock for such Peters;—hang 'em! I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. It is more of a bloody curse. I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. D. A., I am sure, will value it, and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem. His own as good as anybody's, and, God bless him! anybody's as good as his own; for I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The gods, by denying him the very faculty itself of discrimination, have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy, they excited curiosity also; and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able to find it again for you, on his third shelf, where he stuffs his presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust; but on carefully removing that

stratum, a thing like a pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different poetical works that have been given G. D. in return for as many of his own performances, and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again, wherever I found it, shaking the adherences off—and by this means one copy of “my works” served for G. D.—and, with a little dusting, was made over to my good friend Dr. G——, who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made me that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my acquaintance who bows gracefully, my town acquaintance, I mean. How do you like my way of writing with two inks? I think it is pretty and motley. Suppose Mrs. W. adopts it, the next time she holds the pen for you. My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you, and cause to thrive and burgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters.

Yours truly,

CHARLES LAMB.

Mary's love.

The following letter, probably written about this time, is entirely in red ink.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

A letter written in the blood of your poor friend would indeed be of a nature to startle you ; but this is nought but harmless red ink, or, as the witty mercantile phrase hath it, clerk's blood. Hang 'em ! my brain, skin, flesh, bone, carcase, soul, time is all theirs. The Royal Exchange, Gresham's Folly, hath more body and spirit. I admire some of ——'s lines on you, and I admire your postponing reading them. He is a sad tatler, but this is under the rose. Twenty years ago he estranged one friend from me quite, whom I have been regretting, but never could regain since ; he almost alienated you also from me, or me from you, I don't know which. But that breach is closed. The dreary sea is filled up. He has lately been at work "telling again," as they call it—a most gratuitous piece of mischief—and has caused a coolness betwixt me and a (not friend exactly, but) intimate acquaintance. I suspect, also, he saps Manning's faith in me, who am to Manning more than an acquaintance. Still I like his writing

verses about you. Will your kind host and hostess give me a dinner next Sunday, and, better still, *not expect us* if the weather is very bad. Why you should refuse twenty guineas per sheet for Blackwood's or any other magazine puzzles my poor comprehension. But, as Strap says, "you know best." I have no quarrel with you about præprandial avocations, so don't imagine one. That Manchester sonnet \* I think very likely is Capel Lofft's. Another sonnet appeared with the same initials in the same paper, which turned out to be P——'s. What do the rascals mean? Am I to have the fathering of what idle rhymes every beggarly poetaster pours forth! Who put your merrie sonnet "about Brownie" into "Blackwood's?" I did not. So no more till we meet.

Ever yours,

C. L.

The following letter (of post-mark 1822) is addressed to Trinity College, Cambridge, when Miss Wordsworth was visiting her brother, Dr. Wordsworth.

\* A sonnet in "Blackwood," dated Manchester, and signed C. L.

## TO MISS WORDSWORTH.

Mary perfectly approves of the appropriation of the *feathers*, and wishes them peacock's for your fair niece's sake.

DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

I had just written the above endearing words when M—— tapped me on the shoulder with an invitation to cold goose pie, which I was not bird of that sort enough to decline. Mrs. M——, I am most happy to say, is better. Mary has been tormented with a rheumatism, which is leaving her. I am suffering from the festivities of the season. I wonder how my misused carcase holds it out. I have played the experimental philosopher on it, that's certain. Willy\* shall be welcome to a mince-pie and a bout at commerce whenever he comes. He was in our eye. I am glad you liked my new year's speculations, everybody liked them, except the author of the "Pleasures of Hope." Disappointment attend him! How I like to be liked, and *what I do* to be liked!

\* Mr. Wordsworth's second son, then at the Charter-house.

They flatter me in magazines, newspapers, and all the minor reviews; the Quarterlies hold aloof. But they must come into it in time, or their leaves be waste paper. Salute Trinity Library in my name. Two special things are worth seeing at Cambridge, a portrait of Cromwell, at Sydney, and a better of Dr. Harvey, (who found out that blood was red) at Dr. Davy's; you should see<sup>d</sup> them. Coleridge is pretty well, I have not seen him, but hear often of him from Allsop, who sends me hares and pheasants twice a week; I can hardly take so fast as he gives. I have almost forgotten butcher's meat, as plebeian. Are you not glad the cold is gone? I find winters not so agreeable as they used to be "when winter bleak had charms for me." I cannot conjure up a kind similitude for these snowy flakes. Let them keep to twelfth cakes!

Mrs. P——, our Cambridge friend, has been in town. You do not know the W——'s in Trumpington Street. They are capital people. Ask anybody you meet who is the biggest woman in Cambridge, and I'll hold you a wager they'll say Mrs. —; she broke down two benches in Trinity gardens, one on the confines of St. John's,

which occasioned a litigation between the Societies as to repairing it. In warm weather, she retires into an ice-cellar (literally), and dates the returns of the years from a hot Thursday some twenty years back. She sits in a room with opposite doors and windows, to let in a thorough draught, which gives her slenderer friends tooth-aches. She is to be seen in the market every morning at ten cheapening fowls, which I observe the Cambridge poulterers are not sufficiently careful to stump.

Having now answered most of the points contained in your letter, let me end with assuring you of our very best kindness, and excuse Mary for not handling the pen on this occasion, especially as it has fallen into so much better hands. Will Dr. W. accept of my respects at the end of a foolish letter?

C. L.

The following is a fragment of a letter addressed in the beginning of 1823 to Miss Hutchinson at Ramsgate, whither she had gone with an invalid relative.

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

DEAR MISS H.,

\* \* \* \*

It gives me great pleasure (the letter now begins) to hear that you got down so smoothly, and that Mrs. M——'s spirits are so good and enterprising. It shows whatever her posture may be, that her mind at least is not supine. I hope the excursion will enable the former to keep pace with its outstripping neighbour. Pray, present our kindest wishes to her and all; (that sentence should properly have come into the Postscript, but we airy mercurial spirits, there is no keeping us in). "Time" (as was said of one of us) "toils after us in vain." I am afraid our co-visit with Coleridge was a dream. I shall not get away before the end (or middle) of June, and then you will be frog-hopping at Boulogne; and besides, I think the Gilmans would scarce trust him with us; I have a malicious knack at cutting off apron-strings. The Saints' days you speak of have long since fled to heaven, with Astræa, and the cold piety of the age lacks fervour to recall them; only Peter left his key—the iron one of the two that

"shuts amain"—and that is the reason I am locked up. Meanwhile of afternoons we pick up primroses at Dalston, and Mary corrects me when I call 'em cowslips. God bless you all, and pray, remember me euphoniously to Mr. G——. That Lee Priory must be a dainty bower. Is it built of flints?—and does it stand at Kingsgate?

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The following letter to Mr. Walter Wilson, who was composing a "Life of De Foe," in reply to inquiries on various points of the great novelist's history, is *dated* 24th Feb., 1823.

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.

DEAR W.

I write that you may not think me neglectful, not that I have anything to say. In answer to your questions, it was at your house I saw an edition of "Roxana," the preface to which stated that the author had left out all that part of it which related to Roxana's daughter persisting in imagining herself to be so, in spite of the mother's denial, from certain hints she had picked up, and throwing herself continually in her

mother's way (as Savage is said to have done in the way of his, prying in at windows to get a glimpse of her), and that it was by advice of Southern, who objected to the circumstances as being untrue, when the rest of the story was founded on fact; which shows S. to have been a stupid-ish fellow. The incidents so resemble Savage's story, that I taxed Godwin with taking Falkner from his life by Dr. Johnson. You should have the edition (if you have not parted with it), for I saw it never but at your place at the Mews' Gate, nor did I then read it to compare it with my own; only I know the daughter's curiosity is the best part of *my* "Roxana." You ask me for two or three pages of verse. I have not written as much since you knew me. I am altogether prosaic. May be I may touch off a sonnet in time. I do not prefer "Colonel Jack" to either "Robinson Crusoe" or "Roxana." I only spoke of the beginning of it; his childish history. The rest is poor. I do not know anywhere any good character of De Foe besides what you mention.\*

\* Those who wish to read an admirable character of De Foe, associated with the most valuable information respecting his personal history, should revert to an article in the "Edinburgh Review"

I do not know that Swift mentions him; Pope does. I forget if D'Israeli has. Dunlop I think has nothing of him. He is quite new ground, and scarce known beyond "Crusoe." I do not know who wrote "Quarl." I never thought of "Quarl" as having an author. It is a poor imitation; the monkey is the best in it, and his pretty dishes made of shell. Do you know the paper in the "Englishman" by Sir Richard Steele, giving an account of Selkirk? It is admirable, and has all the germs of "Crusoe." You must quote it entire. Captain G. Carleton wrote his own memoirs, they are about Lord Peterborough's campaign in Spain, and a good book. "Puzzelli" puzzles me, and I am in a cloud about "Donald M'Leod." I never heard of them; so you see, my dear Wilson, what poor assistance I can give in the way of information. I wish your book out, for I shall like to see anything about De Foe or from you.

Your old friend,

C. LAMB.

From my and your old compound.

---

on De Foe, attributed to the author of the "Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth," and of the delightful "Biography of Oliver Goldsmith," almost as charming as its subject.

In this year, Lamb made his greatest essay in house-keeping, by occupying Colnebrook Cottage at Islington, on the banks of his beloved New River. There occurred the immersion of George Dyer at noontide, which supplies the subject of one of "The Last Essays of Elia;" and which is veritably related in the following letter of Lamb, which is curious, as containing the germ of that delightful article, and the first sketches of the Brandy-and-Water Doctor therein celebrated as miraculous.

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

DEAR MRS. H.,

Sitting down to write a letter is such a painful operation to Mary, that you must accept me as her proxy. You have seen our house. What I now tell you is literally true: yesterday week, George Dyer called upon us, at one o'clock, (*bright noon day*) on his way to dine with Mrs. Barbauld, at Newington, and he sat with Mary about half an hour. The maid saw him go out, from her kitchen window, but suddenly losing sight of him, ran up in a fright to Mary. G. D., instead of keeping the slip that leads to the gate, had deliberately,

staff in hand; in broad, open day; marched into the New River. He had not his spectacles on, and you know his absence. Who helped him out, they can hardly tell, but between 'em they got him out, drenched thro' and thro'. A mob collected by that time, and accompanied him in. "Send for the Doctor!" they said: and a one-eyed fellow, dirty and drunk, was fetched from the public-house at the end, where it seems he lurks, for the sake of picking up water practice; having formerly had a medal from the Humane Society, for some rescue. By his advice, the patient was put between blankets; and when I came home at four, to dinner, I found G. D. a-bed, and raving, light-headed, with the brandy-and-water which the doctor had administered. He sung, laughed, whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels, would get up and go home; but we kept him there by force; and by next morning he departed sobered, and seems to have received no injury. All my friends are open-mouthed about having paled before the river, but I cannot see, because an absent man chooses to walk into a river, with his eyes open, at midday, I am any the more likely to be drowned in it, coming home at midnight.

"I have had the honour of dining at the Mansion House, on Thursday last, by special card from the Lord Mayor, who never saw my face, nor I his ; and all from being a writer in a magazine ! The dinner costly, served on massy plate, champagne, pines, &c. ; forty-seven present, among whom, the Chairman, and two other Directors of the India Company. There's for you ! and got away pretty sober ! Quite saved my credit !

We continue to like our house prodigiously. Our kind remembrances to all.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

I am pleased that H. liked my letter to the Laureate.

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The following letter to Miss Hutchinson, at Torquay, refers to some of Lamb's later articles, published in the "London Magazine," which, in extending its size and pretensions to a three-and-sixpenny miscellany, had lost much of its spirit. He exults, however, in his veracious "Memoir of Liston !"

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

The brevity of this is owing to scratching it off at my desk amid expected interruptions. By habit, I can write letters only at office.

•  
DEAR MISS H. •

Thank you for a noble goose, which wanted only the massive incrustation that we used to pick-axe open, about this season, in old Gloster Place. When shall we eat another goose pie together? The pheasant, too, must not be forgotten; twice as big, and half as good as a partridge. You ask about the editor of the "London;" I know of none. This first specimen is flat and pert enough to justify subscribers who grudge t'other shilling. De Quincy's "Parody" was submitted to him before printed, and had his *Probatum*.\* The

\* Mr. de Quincy had commenced a series of letters in the "London Magazine," "To a Young Man whose education has been neglected," as a vehicle for conveying miscellaneous information in his admirable style. Upon this hint Lamb, with the assent which Mr. De Quincy could well afford to give, contributed a parody on the scheme in "A Letter to an Old Gentleman whose education has been neglected."

"Horns" is in a poor taste, resembling the most laboured papers in the "Spectator." I had signed it "Jack Horner;" but Taylor and Hessey said it would be thought an offensive article, unless I put my known signature to it, and wrung from me my slow consent. But did you read the "Memoir of Liston?"—and did you guess whose it was? Of all the lies I ever put off, I value this most. It is from top to toe, every paragraph, pure invention, and has passed for gospel; has been republished in newspapers, and in the penny play-bills of the night, as an authentic account. I shall certainly go to the naughty man some day for my fibbings. In the next number, I figure as a theologian, and have attacked my late brethren, the Unitarians. What Jack Pudding tricks I shall play next, I know not; I am almost at the end of my tether. Coleridge is quite blooming, but his book has not budded yet. I hope I have spelt Torquay right now, and that this will find you all mending, and looking forward to a London flight with the Spring. Winter, *we* have had none, but plenty of foul weather. I have lately picked up an epigram which pleased me—

Two noble carls, whom if I quote,  
Some folks might call me sinner,  
The one invented half a coat,  
The other half a dinner.

The plan was good, as some will say,  
And fitted to console one ;  
Because in this poor starving day,  
Few can afford a whole one.

I have made the lame one still lamer by imperfect memory ; in spite of bald diction a little done to it might improve it into a good one. You have nothing else to do at Torquay. Suppose you try it. Well, God bless you all, as wishes Mary most sincerely, with many thanks for letter, &c.

ELIA.

The first dawning hope of Lamb's emancipation from the India House is suggested in the following note to Manning, proposing a visit, in which he refers to a certificate of non-capacity for hard desk-work, given by a medical friend.

TO MR. MANNING.

MY DEAR M.

You might have come inopportunately a week since, when we had an inmate. At present and for as long as *ever* you like, our Castle is at

your service. I saw T—— yesternight, who has done for me what may

“ To all my nights and days to come,  
Give solely sovran sway and masterdom.”

But I dare not hope, for fear of disappointment. I cannot be more explicit at present. But I have it under his own hand, that I am *non-capacitated*, (I cannot write it *in-*) for business. O joyous imbecility! Not a susurrantion of this to *anybody*!

Mary's love.

C. LAMB.

The dream was realised—in April 1825, the “world-wearied clerk” went home for ever—with what delight has been told in the elaborate raptures of his “Superannuated Man,” and in the letters already published. The following may be now added to these, illucidative of his too brief raptures.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

DEAR W.

I write post-haste to ensure a frank. Thanks for your hearty congratulations! I may

now date from the sixth week of my "Hegira, or Flight from Leadenhall." I have lived so much in it, that a summer seems already past; and 'tis but early May with you and other people. How I look down on the slaves and drudges of the world! Its inhabitants are a vast cotton-web of spin-spin-spinners! O the carking cares! O the money-grubbers! Sempiternal muckworms!

Your Virgil I have lost sight of, but suspect it is in the hands of Sir G. Beaumont; I think that circumstance made me shy of procuring it before. Will you write to him about it?—and your commands shall be obeyed to a tittle.

Coleridge has just finished his prize Essay, by which, if it get the prize, he'll touch an additional 100*l.* I fancy. His book, too, ("Commentary on Bishop Leighton,") is quite finished, and *penes* Taylor and Hessey.

In the "London" which is just out (1st May), are two papers entitled the "Superannuated Man," which I wish you to see; and also, 1st April, a little thing called "Barbara S——," a story gleaned from Miss Kelly. The L. M., if you can get it, will save my enlargement upon the topic of my manumission.

I must scribble to make up my *hiatus crumencæ* ; for there are so many ways, pious and profligate, of getting rid of money in this vast city and suburbs, that I shall miss my THIRDS. But *couragio* ! I despair not. Your kind hint of the cottage was well thrown out, an anchorage for age and school of economy, when necessity comes ; but without this latter, I have an unconquerable terror of changing place. It does not agree with us. I say it from conviction ; else I do sometimes ruralise in fancy.

Some d—d people are come in, and I must finish abruptly. By d—d, I only meant deuced. 'Tis these suitors of Penelope that make it necessary to *authorize* a little for gin and mutton, and such trifles.

Excuse my abortive scribble.

Yours, not in more haste than heart,

C. L.

Love and recollection to all the Wms., Doras, Maries round your Wrekin.

Mary is capitally well. Do write to Sir G. B., for I am shyish of applying to him.

## CHAPTER II.

LETTERS OF LAMB'S LAST YEARS, 1825—1834.

How imperfectly the emancipation, so rapturously hailed, fulfilled its promises ; how Lamb left Islington for Enfield, and there, after a while, subsided into a lodger ; and how, at last, he settled at Edmonton to die, sufficiently appear in the former series of his letters. Those which occupy this chapter, scattered through nine years, have either been subsequently communicated by the kindness of the possessors, or were omitted for some personal reason which has lost its force in time. The following, addressed in 1829 to the Editor, on occasion of his giving to a child the name of " Charles Lamb," though withheld from an indisposition to intrude matters so personal to himself on the reader, may now, on his taking farewell of the subject, find its place.

TO MR. TALFOURD.

DEAR TALFOURD,

You could not have told me of a more friendly thing than you have been doing. I am proud of my namesake. I shall take care never to do any dirty action, pick pockets, or anyhow get myself hanged, for fear of reflecting ignominy upon your young Chrisom. I have now a motive to be good. I shall not *omnis moriar*;—my name borne down the black gulf of oblivion.

I shall survive in eleven letters, five more than Cæsar. Possibly I shall come to be knighted, or more! Sir C. L. Talfourd, Bart.!

Yet hath it an authorish twang with it, which will wear out with my name for poetry. Give him a smile from me till I see him. If you do not drop down before, some day in the *week after next* I will come and take one night's lodging with you, if convenient, before you go hence. You shall name it. We are in town to-morrow *speciali gratiâ*, but by no arrangement can get up near you.

Believe us both, with greatest regards, yours  
and Mrs. Talfourd's.

CHARLES LAMB-PHILO-TALFOURD.

I come as near it as I can.\*

\* The child who bore the name so honoured by his parents, survived his god-father only a year—dying at Brighton, whither he had been taken in the vain hope of restoration, on the 3rd December 1835. Will the reader forgive the weakness which prompts the desire, in this place, to link their memories together, by inserting a few verses which, having been only published at the end of the last small edition of the Editor's dramas, may have missed some of the friendly eyes for which they were written ?

Our gentle Charles has passed away  
From earth's short bondage free,  
And left to us its leaden day,  
And mist-enshrouded sea.

Here, by the restless ocean's side,  
Sweet hours of hope have flown,  
When first the triumph of its tide  
Seem'd omen of our own.\*

That eager joy the sea-breeze gave,  
When first it raised his hair,  
Sunk with each day's retiring wave,  
Beyond the reach of prayer.

The sun-blink that through drizzling mist,  
To flickering hope akin,  
Lone waves with feeble fondness kiss'd,  
No smile as faint can win ;

The following notes, undated, but of about 1829, were addressed to Coleridge, under the genial care of Mr. Gilman at Highgate:—

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

DEAR C.

Your sonnet is capital. The paper ingenious,\* only that it split into four parts (besides a

---

Yet not in vain, with radiance weak,  
The heavenly stranger gleams—  
Not of the world it lights to speak,  
But that from whence it streams.

That world our patient sufferer sought,  
Serene with pitying eyes,  
As if his mounting Spirit caught  
The wisdom of the skies.

With boundless love it look'd abroad  
For one bright moment given ;  
Shone with a loveliness that aw'd,  
And quiver'd into Heaven.

A year, made slow by care and toil,  
Has paced its weary round,  
Since Death enrich'd with kindred spoil  
The snow-clad, frost-ribb'd ground.

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\* Some gauzy tissue paper on which the sonnet was copied.

side splinter) in the carriage. I have transferred it to the common English paper, *manufactured of*

---

Then Lamb, with whose endearing name  
Our boy we proudly graced,  
Shrank from the warmth of sweeter fame  
Than mightier Bards embraced.

Still 'twas a mournful joy to think  
Our darling might supply  
For years on earth, a living link,  
To name that cannot die.

And though such fancy gleam no more  
On earthly sorrow's night,  
Truth's nobler torch unveils the shore  
Which lends to both its light.

The nursing there that hand may take,  
None ever grasp'd in vain ;  
And smiles of well-known sweetness wake,  
Without their tinge of pain.

Though 'twixt the Child and child-like Bard,  
Late seemed distinction wide,  
Each now may trace in Heaven's regard,  
How near they were allied.

Within the infant's ample brow  
Blythe fancies lay unfurl'd,  
Which, all uncrush'd, may open now,  
To charm a sinless world.

Though the soft spirit of those eyes  
Might ne'er with Lamb's compete—  
Ne'er sparkle with a wit as wise,  
Or melt in tears, as sweet ;

*rags*, for better preservation. I never knew before how the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" were written. 'Tis strikingly corroborated by observations on Cats. These domestic animals, put 'em on a rug before the fire, wink their eyes up, and listen to the kettle, and then purr, which is *their* poetry.

On Sunday week we kiss your hands (if they are clean). This next Sunday I have been engaged for some time.

With remembrances to your good host and hostess,

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

That calm and unforgotten look  
 A kindred love reveals,  
 With his who never friend forsook,  
 Or hurt a thing that feels.

In thought profound, in wildest glee,  
 In sorrows dark and strange,  
 The soul of Lamb's bright infancy  
 Endured no spot or change..

From traits of each our love receives  
 For comfort, nobler scope ;  
 While light, which child-like genius leaves,  
 Confirms the infant's hope ;

And in that hope with sweetness fraught  
 Be aching hearts beguiled,  
 To blend in one delightful thought,  
 The POET and the CHILD !

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR COLERIDGE,

With pain and grief, I must entreat you to excuse us on Thursday. My head, though externally correct, has had severe concussion in my long illness, and the very idea of an engagement hanging over for a day or two, forbids my rest, and I get up miserable. I am not well enough for company. I do assure you, no other thing prevents me coming. I expect — and his brothers this or to-morrow evening, and it worries me to death that I am not ostensibly ill enough to put 'em off. I will get better, when I shall hope to see your nephew. He will come again. Mary joins in best love to the Gilmans. Do, I earnestly entreat you, excuse me. I assure you, again, that I am not fit to go out yet.

Yours (though shattered),

C. LAMB.

*Tuesday.*

The next two *notelets* are addressed to Coleridge's excellent host, on the occasion of borrowing and returning the works of Fuller :—

TO MR. GILMAN.

Pray trust me with the "Church History," as well as the "Worthies." A moon shall restore both. Also give me back "Him of Aquinium." In return you have the *light of my countenance*.<sup>\*</sup> Adieu.

P. S. A sister also of mine comes with it. A son of Nimshi drives her. Their driving will have been furious, impassioned. Pray God they have not toppled over the tunnel! I promise you I fear their steed, bred out of the wind without father, semi-Melchisedec-ish, hot, phaetontic. From my country lodgings at Enfield.

C. L.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR GILMAN,

Pray do you, or S. T. C., immediately write to say you have received back the golden works of the dear, fine, silly old angel, which I part from, bleeding, and to say how the winter has used you all.

\* A sketch of Lamb, by an amateur artist.

It is our intention soon, weather permitting, to come over for a day at Highgate ; for beds we will trust to the Gate-House, should you be full : tell me if we may come casually, for in this change of climate, there is no naming a day for walking. With best loves to Mrs. Gilman, &c.,

Yours mopish, but in health,

C. LAMB.

I shall be uneasy till I hear of Fuller's safe arrival.

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While Lamb was residing at Enfield, the friendship which, in 1824, he had formed with Mr. Moxon, led to very frequent intercourse, destined, in after years, to be rendered habitual, by the marriage of his friend with the young lady whom he regarded almost as a daughter. In 1828 Mr. Moxon, at the request of Mr. Hurst, of the firm of Hurst, Chance, and Co., applied to Lamb to supply an article for the "Keepsake," which he, always disliking the flimsy elegancies of the Annuals—sadly opposed to his own exclusive taste for old, standard, moth-eaten books ;—thus declined :—

TO MR. MOXON.

MY DEAR M.

It is my firm determination to have nothing to do with "Forget-me-Nots"—pray excuse me as civilly as you can to Mr. Hurst. I will take care to refuse any other applications. The things which Pickering has, if to be had again, I have promised absolutely, you know, to poor Hood, from whom I had a melancholy epistle yesterday; besides that Emma has decided objections to her own and her friends' Album verses being published; but if she gets over that, they are decidedly Hood's.

Till we meet, farewell. Loves to Dash.\*

C. L.

The following introduced Mr. Patmore to Mr. Moxon:—

TO MR. MOXON.

DEAR M.

My friend Patmore, author of the "Months," a very pretty publication—of sundry Essays in the "London," "New Monthly," &c.,

\* The great dog, which was, at one time, the constant companion of his long walks.

wants to dispose of a volume or two of "Tales." Perhaps they might chance to suit Hurst; but be that as it may, he will call upon you, *under favour of my recommendation*; and as he is returning to France, where he lives, if you can do anything for him in the Treaty line, to save him dancing over the Channel every week, I am sure you will. I said I'd never trouble you again; but how vain are the resolves of mortal man! P. is a very hearty friendly good fellow—and was poor John Scott's second,—as I shall be yours when you want me. May you never be mine!

Yours truly,

C. L.

*Enfield.*

The following two letters, addressed to Mr. H. C. Robinson, when afflicted with rheumatism, are in Lamb's wildest strain of mirth. In the first, he pretends to endure all the pain he believes his friend to be suffering, and attributes it to his own incautious habits; in the second he attributes the suffering to his friend in a strain of exaggeration, probably intended to make the reality more tolerable by comparison:—

TO MR. H. C. ROBINSON.

DEAR ROBINSON,

We are afraid you will slip from us from England without again seeing us. It would be charity to come and see one. I have these three days been laid up with strong rheumatic pains, in loins, back, shoulders. I shriek sometimes from the violence of them. I get scarce any sleep, and the consequence is, I am restless, and want to change sides as I lie, and I cannot turn without resting on my hands, and so turning all my body all at once, like a log with a lever. While this rainy weather lasts I have no hope of alleviation. I have tried flannels and embrocation in vain. Just at the hip joint the pangs are sometimes so excruciating, that I cry out. It is as violent as the cramp, and far more continuous. I am ashamed to whine about these complaints to you, who can ill enter into them; but indeed they are sharp. You go about, in rain or fine, at all hours, without discommodity. I envy you your immunity at a time of life not much removed from my own. But you owe your exemption to temperance, which it

is too late for me to pursue. I, in my lifetime, have had my good things. Hence my frame is brittle—your's strong as brass. I never knew any ailment you had. You can go out at night in all weathers, sit up all hours. Well, I don't want to moralise, I only wish to say that if you are inclined to a game at double-dumby, I would try and bolster up myself in a chair for a rubber or so. My days are tedious, but less so, and less painful, than my nights. May you never know the pain and difficulty I have in writing so much! Mary, who is most kind, joins in the wish!

C. LAMB.

*April 10th, 1829.*

THE COMPANION LETTER TO THE SAME.

(A WEEK AFTERWARDS.)

I do confess to mischief. It was the subtlest diabolical piece of malice heart of man has contrived. I have no more rheumatism than that poker. Never was freer from all pains and aches. Every joint sound, to the tip of the ear from the extremity of the lesser toe. The report of thy torments was blown circuitously here from Bury. I could not resist the jeer. I conceived you

writhing, when you should just receive my congratulations. How mad you'd be. Well, it is not in my method to inflict pangs. I leave that to Heaven. But in the existing pangs of a friend, I have a share. His disquietude crowns my exemption. I imagine you howling; and I pace across the room, shooting out my free arms, legs, &c., , this way and that way, with an assurance of not kindling a spark of pain from them. I deny that Nature meant us to sympathise with agonies. Those face-contortions, retortions, distortions have the merriness of antics. Nature meant them for farce—not so pleasant to the actor, indeed; but Grimaldi cries when we laugh, and it is but one that suffers to make thousands rejoice.

You say that shampooing is ineffectual. But, *per se*, it is good, to show the introvolutions, extravolutions of which the animal frame is capable—to show what the creature is receptive of, short of dissolution.

You are worst of nights, a'nt you? You never was rack'd, was you? I should like an authentic map of those feelings.

You seem to have the flying gout. You can

scarcely screw a smile out of your face, can you? I sit at immunity and sneer *ad libitum*. 'Tis now the time for you to make good resolutions. I may go on breaking 'em for anything the worse I find myself. Your doctor seems to keep you on the long cure. Precipitate healings are never good. Don't come while you are so bad; I shan't be able to attend to your throes and the dumby at once. I should like to know how slowly the pain goes off. But don't write, unless the motion will be likely to make your sensibility more exquisite.

Your affectionate and truly healthy friend,

C. LAMB.

Mary thought a letter from me might amuse you in your torment.

*April 17th, 1829.*

The following graphic sketch of the happy temperament of one of Lamb's intimate friends, now no more, is contained in a letter to—

MR. WORDSWORTH.

A—— is well, and in harmony with himself and the world. I don't know how he, and

those of his constitution, keep their nerves so nicely balanced as they do. Or, have they any? Or, are they made of packthread? He is proof against weather, ingratitude, meat underdone, every weapon of fate. I have just now a jagged end of a tooth pricking against my tongue, which meets it half way, in a wantonness of provocation; and there they go at it, the tongue pricking itself, like the viper against the file, and the tooth galling all the gum, inside and out to torture; tongue and tooth, tooth and tongue, hard at it; and I to pay the reckoning, till all my mouth is as hot as brimstone; and I'd venture the roof of my mouth, that at this moment, at which I conjecture my full-happiness'd friend is picking his crackers, that not one of the double rows of ivory in his privileged mouth has as much as a flaw in it, but all perform their functions, and, having performed them, expect to be picked, (luxurious steeds!) and rubbed down. I don't think he could be robbed, or have his house set on fire, or even want money. I have heard him express a similar opinion of his own infallibility. I keep acting here Heautontimorumenos.

\* \* \* \* \*

Have you seen a curious letter in the Morning

Chronicle, by C. L.,\* the genius of absurdity, respecting Bonaparte's suing out his Habeas Corpus? That man is his own moon. He has no need of ascending into that gentle planet for mild influences.

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In 1830, Lamb tried the experiment of lodging a little while in London; but Miss Lamb's malady compelled him to return to the solitude of Enfield. He thus communicates the sad state of his sister:—

TO MR. MOXON.

DEAR MOXON,

I have brought my sister to Enfield, being sure that she had no hope of recovery in London. Her state of mind is deplorable beyond any example. I almost fear whether she has strength at her time of life ever to get out of it. Here she

\* Capel Lofft, a barrister residing in Suffolk, a well-known whig and friend of Major Wyvil and Major Cartwright, who sometimes half vexed Lamb by signing, as he had a right, their common initials to a sonnet. He wrote a very vehement letter, contending that the detention of Napoleon on board a vessel off the coast, preparatory to his being sent to St. Helena, was illegal, and that the captain of the vessel would be compelled to surrender him in obedience to a writ of Habeas Corpus.

must be nursed, and neither see nor hear of anything in the world, out of her sick chamber. The mere hearing that Southey had called at our lodgings, totally upset her. Pray see him, or hear of him at Mr. Rickman's, and excuse my not writing to him. I dare not write, or receive a letter in her presence ; every little talk so agitates her. Westwood will receive any letter for me, and give it me privately.

Pray assure Southey of my kindest feelings towards him, and, if you do not see him, send this to him.

Kindest remembrances to your sister, and believe me ever

Yours,

C. LAMB.

Remember me kindly to the Allsops.

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The following note to Mr. Moxon, on some long forgotten occasion of momentary displeasure, the nature and object of which is uncertain,—contains a fantastical exaggeration of anger, which, judged by those who knew the writer, will only illustrate the entire absence of all the bad passions of hatred and contempt it feigns.

TO MR. MOXON.

DEAR M.,

Many thanks for the books ; but most thanks for one immortal sentence : “ If I do not *cheat* him, never *trust* me again.” I do not know whether to admire most, the wit or justness of the sentiment. It has my cordial approbation. My sense of *meum* and *tuum* applauds it. I maintain it, the eighth commandment hath a secret special reservation, by which the reptile is exempt from any protection from it. As a dog, or a nigger, he is not a holder of property. Not a ninth of what he detains from the world is his own. Keep your hands from picking and stealing, is no ways referable to his acquists. I doubt whether bearing false witness against thy neighbour at all contemplated this possible scrub. Could Moses have seen the speck in vision ? An *ex post facto* law alone could relieve him ; and we are taught to expect no eleventh commandment. The outlaw to the Mosaic dispensation—unworthy to have seen Moses behind !—to lay his desecrating hands upon Elia ! Has the irreverent ark-toucher been

struck blind, I wonder ? The more I think of him, the less I think of him. His meanness is invisible with aid of solar microscope. My moral eye smarts at him. The less flea that bites little fleas ! The great BEAST ! the beggarly NIT ! •

More when we meet ; mind, you'll come, two of you ; and couldn't you go off in the morning, that we may have a day-long curse at him, if curses are not dishallowed by descending so low ? Amen. Maledicatur in extremis !

C. L.

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In the Spring of the year, Mr. Murray, the eminent publisher, through one of Lamb's oldest and most cherished friends, Mr. Ayrton, proposed that he should undertake a continuation of his *Specimens of the Old English Dramatists*. The proposal was communicated by Mr. Ayrton to Lamb, then at Enfield, and then too painfully anxious for the recovery of Miss Isola, who was dangerously ill in Suffolk, to make the arrangement desired. The following is the reply:—

•

TO MR. AYRTON.

MR. WESTWOOD'S, CHASE SIDE, ENFIELD.

14th March, 1830.

MY DEAR AYRTON,

Your letter, which was only not so pleasant as your appearance would have been, has revived some old images; Phillips,\* (not the Colonel), with his few hairs bristling up at the charge of a revoke, which he declares impossible; the old Captain's significant nod over the right shoulder† (was it not?); Mrs. B——'s determined questioning of the score, after the game was absolutely gone to the d—l; the plain, but hospitable cold boiled-beef suppers at sideboard; all which fancies, redolent of middle age and strengthful

\* Edward Phillips, Esq., Secretary to the Right Hon. Charles Abbott, Speaker of the House of Commons. The "Colonel" alluded to was the Lieutenant of Marines who accompanied Capt. Cook in his last voyage, and on shore with that great man when he fell a victim to his humanity. On the death of his commander, Lieutenant Phillips, himself wounded, swam off to the boats; but seeing one of his marines struggling in the water to escape the natives who were pursuing him, gallantly swam back, protected his man at the peril of his own life, and both reached their boat in safety. He afterwards married that accomplished and amiable daughter of Dr. Burney, whose name so frequently occurs in the Diary and Correspondence of her sister, Madame D'Arblay.

† Captain (afterwards Admiral), James Burney.

spirits, come across us ever and anon in this vale of deliberate senectitude, ycleped Enfield.

You imagine a deep gulf between you and us ; and there is a pitiable hiatus in *kind* between St. James's Park and this extremity of Middlesex. But the mere distance in turnpike roads is a trifle. The roof of a coach swings you down in an hour or two. We have a sure hot joint on a Sunday, and when had we better ? I suppose you know that ill health has obliged us to give up house-keeping, but we have an asylum at the very next door—only twenty-four inches further from town, which is not material in a country expedition—where a *table d'hôte* is kept for us, without trouble on our parts, and we adjourn after dinner, when one of the old world (old friends) drops casually down among us. Come and find us out ; and seal our judicious change with your approbation, whenever the whim bites, or the sun prompts. No need of announcement, for we are sure to be at home.

I keep putting off the subject of my answer. In truth I am not in spirits at present to see Mr. Murray on such a business ; but pray offer him my acknowledgments, and an assurance

that I should like at least one of his propositions, as I have so much additional matter for the SPECIMENS, as might make two volumes in all; or ONE, (new edition) omitting such better known authors as Beaumont and Fletcher, Jonson, &c.

But we are both in trouble at present. A very dear young friend of ours, who passed her Christmas holidays here, has been taken dangerously ill with a fever, from which she is very precariously recovering, and I expect a summons to fetch her when she is well enough to bear the journey from Bury. It is Emma Isola, with whom we got acquainted at our first visit to your sister, at Cambridge, and she has been an occasional inmate with us—and of late years much more frequently—ever since. While she is in this danger, and till she is out of it, and here in a probable way to recovery, I feel that I have no spirits for an engagement of any kind. It has been a terrible shock to us; therefore I beg that you will make my handsomest excuses to Mr. Murray.

Our very kindest loves to Mrs. A. and the younger A.'s.

\* \* \* \* \*

Your unforgotten,

G. LAMB.

Good tidings soon reached Lamb of Miss Isola's health, and he went to Farnham to bring her, for a month's visit, to Enfield. The following are portions of letters addressed to the lady from whose care he had removed her, after their arrival at home, other parts of which have been already published.

TO MRS. WILLIAMS.

ENFIELD, *April 2nd*, 1830.

DEAR MADAM,

I have great pleasure in letting you know Miss Isola has suffered very little from fatigue on her long journey; I am ashamed to say that I came home rather the more tired of the two. But I am a very unpractised traveller. We found my sister very well in health, only a little impatient to see her; and, after a few hysterical tears for gladness, all was comfortable again. We arrived here from Epping between five and six.

How I employed myself between Epping and Enfield, the poor verses in the front of my paper may inform you, which you may please to christen an "Acrostic in a cross-road," and which I wish were worthier of the lady they refer to, but trust

you will plead my pardon to her on a subject so delicate as a lady's good *name*. Your candour must acknowledge that they are written straight. And now, dear madam, I have left myself hardly space to express my sense of the friendly reception I found at Farnham. Mr. Williams will tell you that we had the pleasure of a slight meeting with him on the road, where I could almost have told him, but that it seemed ungracious, that such had been your hospitality, that I scarcely missed the good master of the family at Farnham, though heartily I should rejoice to have made a little longer acquaintance with him. I will say nothing of our deeper obligations to both of you, because I think we agreed at Farnham that gratitude may be over-exacted on the part of the obliging, and over-expressed on the part of the obliged person.

\* \* \* \* \*

Miss Isola is writing, and will tell you that we are going on very comfortably. Her sister is just come. She blames my last verses, as being more written on Mr. Williams than yourself; but how should I have parted whom a Superior Power has brought together? I beg you will jointly

accept of all our best respects, and pardon your obsequious, if not troublesome correspondent,

C. L.

P.S.—I am the worst folder-up of a letter in the world, except certain Hottentots, in the land of Caffre, who never fold up their letters at all, writing very badly upon skins, &c.

The following contains Lamb's account of the same journey, addressed to Buxton:—

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

ENFIELD, *Saturday*.

Mary's love? Yes. Mary Lamb is quite well.

DEAR SARAH,

I found my way to Northaw, on Thursday, and saw a very good woman behind a counter, who says also that you are a very good lady. I did not accept her offered glass of wine, (home-made, I take it) but craved a cup of ale, with which I seasoned a slice of cold lamb, from a sandwich box, which I ate in her back parlour, and proceeded for Berkhamstead, &c. ; lost myself over a heath, and had a day's pleasure. I wish you could walk as I

do, and as you used to do. I am sorry to find you are so poorly; and, now I have found my way, I wish you back at Goody Tomlinson's. What a pretty village 'tis. I should have come sooner, but was waiting a summons to Bury. Well, it came, and I found the good parson's lady (he was from home) exceedingly hospitable.

Poor Emma, the first moment we were alone, took me into a corner, and cried, "Now pray don't *drink*; do check yourself after dinner, for my sake, and when we get home to Enfield, you shall drink as much as ever you please, and I won't say a word about it." How I behaved, you may guess, when I tell you that Mrs. Williams and I have written acrostics on each other, and "she hoped that she should have no reason to regret Miss Isola's recovery, by its depriving *her* of our begun correspondence." Emma stayed a month with us, and has gone back (in tolerable health) to her long home, for *she* comes not again for a twelvemonth. I amused Mrs. Williams with an occurrence on our road to Enfield.\* We travelled with one of those troublesome fellow-passengers in a stage-coach,

\* This little anecdote was told by Lamb in a letter previously published, but not quite so richly as here.

that is called a well-informed man. For twenty miles, we discoursed about the properties of steam, probabilities of carriages by ditto, till all my science, and more than all, was exhausted, and I was thinking of escaping my torment by getting up on the outside, when, getting into Bishops Stortford, my gentleman, spying some farming land, put an unlucky question to me: "What sort of a crop of turnips I thought we should have this year?" Emma's eyes turned to me, to know what in the world I could have to say; and she burst out into a violent fit of laughter, maugre her pale, serious cheeks, when, with the greatest gravity, I replied, that "it depended, I believed, upon boiled legs of mutton." This clenched our conversation, and my gentleman, with a face half wise, half in scorn, troubled us with no more conversation, scientific or philosophical, for the remainder of the journey. S—— was here yesterday, and as *learned* to the full as my fellow-traveller. What a pity that he will spoil a wit, and a most pleasant fellow (as he is) by wisdom. N. Y——\* is as good, and as odd as ever. We had a dispute about the word

\* A very old and dear friend of Lamb who had just been called to the bar.

“heir,” which I contended was pronounced like “air;” he said that it might be in common parlance; or that we might so use it, speaking of the “Heir-at-Law,” a comedy; but that in the law courts it was necessary to give it a full aspiration, and to say *hayer*; he thought it might even vitiate a cause, if a counsel pronounced it otherwise. In conclusion, he would consult Serjeant Wilde, who gave it against him. Sometimes he falleth into the water; sometimes into the fire. He came down here, and insisted on reading Virgil’s “Eneid” all through with me, (which he did) because a counsel must know Latin. Another time he read out all the Gospel of St. John, because quotations are very emphatic in a court of justice. A third time, he would carve a fowl, which he did very ill-favouredly, because “we did not know how indispensable it was for a barrister to do all those sort of things well? Those little things were of more consequence than we supposed.” So he goes on harassing about the way to prosperity, and losing it, with a long head, but somewhat a wrong one—harum-scarum. Why does not his guardian angel look to him? He deserves one: may be, he has tired him out.

I am with this long scrawl, but I thought in your exile, you might like a letter. Commend me to all the wonders in Derbyshire, and tell the devil I humbly kiss my hand to him.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

The esteem which Lamb had always cherished for Mr. Rogers, was quickened into a livelier feeling by the generous interest which the poet took in the success of Mr. Moxon, who was starting as a publisher. The following little note shows the state of his feelings at this time towards two distinguished persons.

TO MR. MOXON.

ENFIELD, *Tuesday*.

DEAR M.,

I dined with your and my Rogers, at Mr. Cary's, yesterday. Cary consulted him on the proper bookseller to offer a lady's MS. novel to. I said I would write to *you*. But I wish you would call on the translator of Dante, at the British Museum, and talk with him. He is the

pleasantest of clergymen. I told him of all Rogers's handsome behaviour to you, and you are already no stranger. Go! I made Rogers laugh about your Nightingale Sonnet, not having heard one. 'Tis a good sonnet, notwithstanding. You shall have the books shortly.

C. L.

Mr. Moxon, having become the publisher of "The Englishman's Magazine," obtained Lamb's aid, as a contributor of miscellaneous articles, which were arranged to appear under the comprehensive title of "Peter's Net." The following accompanied his first contribution, in which some reminiscences of the Royal Academy were enshrined.

TO MR. MOXON.

DEAR M.,

The *R.A.* here memorised was George Dawe, whom I knew well, and heard many anecdotes of, from DANIELS and WESTALL, at H. Rogers's; *to each of them* it will be well to send a magazine in my name. It will fly like wildfire among the Royal Academicians and artists. Could

you get hold of Proctor?—his chambers are in Lincoln's Inn, at Montague's; or of Janus Weathercock?—both of their *prose* is capital. Don't encourage poetry. The "Peter's Net" does not intend funny things only. All is fish. And leave out the sickening "Elia" at the end. Then it may comprise letters and characters, addressed to Peter; but a signature forces it to be all characteristic of the one man, Elia, or the one man, Peter, which cramped me formerly. I have agreed *not* for my sister to know the subjects I choose, till the magazine comes out; so beware of speaking of 'em, or writing about 'em, save generally. Be particular about this warning. Can't you drop in some afternoon, and take a bed? The Athenæum has been hoaxed with some exquisite poetry, that was, two or three months ago, in "Hone's Book." I like your first number capitally. But is not it small? Come and see us, week-day if possible.

Send, or bring me Hone's number for August. The anecdotes of E. and of G. D. are substantially true; what does Elia (or Peter) care for dates?

The poem I mean, is in "Hone's Book," as far back as April. I do not know who wrote it; but

'tis a poem I envy—that and Montgomery's "Last Man:" I envy the writers, because I feel I could have done something like them.

C. L.

The following contains Lamb's characteristic acknowledgment of a payment on account of these contributions.

TO MR. MOXON.

DEAR M.,

Your letter's contents pleased me. I am only afraid of taxing you. Yet I want a stimulus, or I think I should drag sadly. I shall keep the monies in trust, till I see you fairly over the next 1st January. Then I shall look upon 'em as earned. No part of your letter gave me more pleasure (no, not the 10*l.*, tho' you may grin) than that you will revisit old Enfield, which I hope will be always a pleasant idea to you.

Yours, very faithfully,

C. L.

The magazine, although enriched with Lamb's

articles, and some others of great merit, did not meet with a success so rapid as to requite the proprietor for the labour and anxiety of its production. The following is Lamb's letter, in reply to one announcing a determination to discontinue its publication :—

TO MR. MOXON.

To address an abdicated monarch is a nice point of breeding. To give him his lost titles is to mock him ; to withhold them is to wound him. But his minister, who falls with him, may be gracefully sympathetic. I do honestly feel for your diminution of honours, and regret even the pleasing cares which are part and parcel of greatness. Your magnanimous submission, and the cheerful tone of your renunciation in a letter, (which, without flattery, would have made an "ARTICLE," and which, rarely as I keep letters, shall be preserved,) comfort me a little. Will it please or plague you, to say that when your parcel came, I cursed it, for my pen was warming in my hand at a ludicrous description of a Landscape of an R.A., which I calculated upon sending you to-morrow, the last day

you gave me? Now any one calling in, or a letter coming, puts an end to my writing for the day. Little did I think that the mandate had gone out, so destructive to my occupation, so relieving to the apprehensions of the whole body of R.A's.; so you see I had not quitted the ship while a plank was remaining.

To drop metaphors, I am sure you have done wisely. The very spirit of your epistle speaks that you have a weight off your mind. I have one on mine; the cash in hand, which, as — less truly says, burns in my pocket. I feel queer at returning it, (who does not?) you feel awkward at retaking it, (who ought not?)—is there no middle way of adjusting this fine embarrassment? I think I have hit upon a medium to skin the sore place over, if not quite to heal it. You hinted that there might be something under 10*l.*, by and by, accruing to me—*Devil's money*;\* (you are sanguine; say 7*l.* 10*s.*); that I entirely renounce, and abjure all future interest in: I insist upon it, and, “by him I will not name,” I won't touch a penny of it. That

\* Alluding to a little extravagance of Lamb's—scarcely worth recollecting—in emulation of the “Devil's Walk” of Southey and Co.

will split your loss, one half, and leave me conscientious possessor of what I hold. Less than your assent to this, no proposal will I accept of.

The Rev. Mr. —, whose name you have left illegible (is it *Seagull*?) never sent me any book on Christ's Hospital, by which I could dream that I was indebted to him for a dedication. Did G. D. send his penny tract to me, to convert me to Unitarianism? Dear, blundering soul! why I am as old a Unitarian as himself. Or did he think his cheap publication would bring over the Methodists over the way here? \* However, I'll give it to the pew-opener, in whom I have a little interest, to hand over to the clerk, whose wife she sometimes drinks tea with, for him to lay before the deacon, who exchanges the civility of the hat with him, to transmit to the minister, who shakes hands with him out of chapel, and he, in all odds, will light his pipe with it.

I wish very much to see you. I leave it to you to come how you will; we shall be very glad (we need not repeat) to see your sister, or sisters, with you; but for you, individually, I will just hint that a dropping in to tea, unlooked for, about five,

\* Referring to a chapel opposite his lodging at Enfield.

stopping bread-and-cheese and gin-and-water, is worth a thousand Sundays. I am naturally miserable on a Sunday; but a week-day evening and supper is like old times. Set out *now*, and give no time to deliberation.

P.S.—The second volume of “Elia” is delightful (ly bound, I mean), and quite cheap. Why, man, ’tis a unique!

If I write much more I shall expand into an article, which I cannot afford to let you have so cheap. By the by, to show the perverseness of human will, while I thought I *must* furnish one of those accursed things monthly, it seemed a labour above Hercules’ “Twelve” in a year, which were evidently monthly contributions. Now I am emancipated, I feel as if I had a thousand Essays swelling within me. False feelings both!

Your ex-Lampoonist, or Lamb-punnist, from Enfield, October 24, or “last day but one for receiving articles that can be inserted.”

The following was addressed, soon after,

TO MR. MOXON.

DEAR MOXON,

The snows are ankle-deep, slush, and mire, that 'tis hard to get to the post-office, and cruel to send the maid out. 'Tis a slough of despair, or I should sooner have thanked you for your offer of the "*Life*," which we shall very much like to have, and will return duly. I do not know when I shall be in town, but in a week or two, at farthest, when I will come as far as you, if I can. We are moped to death with confinement within doors; I send you a curiosity of G. Dyer's tender conscience. Between thirty and forty years since, G. published the "*Poet's Fate*," in which were two very harmless lines about Mr. Rogers, but Mr. R., not quite approving of them, they were left out in a subsequent edition, 1801. But G. has been worrying about them ever since; if I have heard once, I have heard him a hundred times, express a remorse proportioned to a consciousness of having been guilty of an atrocious libel. As the devil would have it, a man they call Barker, in his "*Parriana*" has quoted the

identical two lines, as they stood in some obscure edition anterior to 1801, and the withers of poor G. are again wrung. His letter is a gem; with his poor blind eyes it has been laboured out at six sittings. The history of the couplet is in page 3 of this irregular production, in which every variety of shape and size that letters can be twisted into is to be found. Do show *his* part of it to Mr. R. some day. If he has bowels, they must melt at the contrition so queerly charactered of a contrite sinner. G. was born, I verily think, without original sin, but chooses to have a conscience, as every Christian gentleman should have; his dear face is insusceptible of the twist they call a sneer, yet he is apprehensive of being suspected of that ugly appearance. When he makes a compliment, he thinks he has given an affront—a name is personality. But show (no hurry) this unique recantation to Mr. R.: 'tis like a dirty pocket-handkerchief, mucked with tears of some indigent Magdalen. There is the impress of sincerity in every pot-hook and hanger; and then the gilt frame to such a pauper picture; it should go into the Museum!

Come when the weather will possibly let you;

I want to see the Wordsworths, but I do not much like to be all night away. It is dull enough to be here together, but it is duller to leave Mary ; in short, it is painful, and in a flying visit I should hardly catch them. I have no beds for them if they come down, and but a sort of a house to receive them in ; yet I shall regret their departure unseen ; I feel cramped and straitened every way. Where are they ?

We have heard from Emma but once, and that a month ago, and are very anxious for another letter.

You say we have forgot your powers of being serviceable to us. *That* we never shall ; I do not know what I should do without you when I want a little commission. Now then : there are left at Miss Buffon's, the "Tales of the Castle," and certain volumes of the "Retrospective Review." The first should be conveyed to Novello's, and the Reviews should be taken to Talfourd's office, ground-floor, east side, Elm Court, Middle Temple, to whom I should have written, but my spirits are wretched ; it is quite an effort to write this. So with the "*Life*," I have cut you out three pieces of service. What can I do for you here, but hope to

see you very soon, and think of you with most kindness? I fear to-morrow, between rains and snows it would be impossible to expect you, but do not let a practicable Sunday pass. We are always at home.

Mary joins in remembrances to your sister, whom we hope to see in any fineish weather, when she'll venture.

Remember us to Ællsop, and all the dead people; to whom, and to London, we seem dead.

In February 1833, the following letter was addressed by Lamb to the editor, on his being made Serjeant:—

TO MR. SERJEANT TALFOURD.

MY DEAR T.,

Now cannot I call him *Serjeant*; what is there in a coif? Those canvas-sleeves protective from ink,\* when he was a law-chit—a *Chittyling*, (let the leathern apron be apocryphal) do more 'specially plead to the Jury Court, of old memory.

\* Mr. Lamb always insisted that the costume referred to was worn when he first gladdened his young friend by a call at Mr. Chitty's chambers. I am afraid it is all apocryphal.

The costume (will he agnize it?) was as of a desk-fellow, or Socius Plutei. Methought I spied a brother!

That familiarity is extinct for ever. Curse me if I can call him Mr. Serjeant—except, mark me, in *company*. Honour where honour is due; but should he ever visit us, (do you think he ever will, Mary?) what a distinction should I keep up between him and our less fortunate friend, H. C. R! Decent respect shall always be the Crabb's—but, somehow, short of reverence.

Well, of my old friends, I have lived to see two knighted, one made a judge, another in a fair way to it. Why am I restive? why stands my sun upon Gibeah?

Variously, my dear Mrs. Talfourd, [I can be more familiar with her!] *Mrs. Serjeant Talfourd*,—my sister prompts me—(these ladies stand upon ceremonies)—has the congratulable news affected the members of our small community. Mary comprehended it at once, and entered into it heartily. Mrs. W—— was, as usual, perverse; wouldn't, or couldn't, understand it. A Serjeant? She thought Mr. T. was in the law. Didn't know that he ever 'listed.

Emma alone truly sympathised. *She* had a silk gown come home that very day, and has precedence before her learned sisters accordingly.

We are going to drink the health of Mr. and Mrs. Serjeant, with all the young serjeantry—and that is all that I can see that I shall get by the promotion.

Valete, et mementote amici quondam vestri humillimi,

C. L.

In the Spring of 1833, Lamb made his last removal from Enfield to Edmonton. He was about to lose the society of Miss Isola, on the eve of marriage, and determined to live altogether with his sister, whether in her sanity or her madness. This change was announced in the following letter

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

*End of May nearly.*

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

Your letter, save in what respects your dear sister's health, cheered me in my new solitude. Mary is ill again. Her illnesses encroach yearly.

The last was three months, followed by two of depression most dreadful. I look back upon her earlier attacks with longing. Nice little durations of six weeks or so, followed by complete restoration,—shocking as they were to me then. In short, half her life she is dead to me, and the other half is made anxious with fears and lookings forward to the next shock. With such prospects, it seemed to me necessary that she should no longer live with me, and be flustered with continual removals; so I am come to live with her, at a Mr. Walden's, and his wife, who take in patients, and have arranged to lodge and board us only. They have had the care of her before. *Sunt lachrymæ rerum!* and you and I must bear it.

To lay a little more load on it, a circumstance has happened, *cujus pars magna fui*, and which, at another crisis, I should have more rejoiced in. I am about to lose my old and only walk-companion, whose mirthful spirits were the “youth of our house,” Emma Isola. I have been here now for a little while, but she is too nervous, properly to be under such a roof, so she will make short visits,—be no more an inmate. With my perfect approval, and more than concurrence, she is

to be wedded to Moxon, at the end of August—so “perish the roses and the flowers”—how is it?

Now to the brighter side. I am emancipated from Enfield. I am with attentive people, and younger. I am three or four miles nearer the great city; coaches half-price less, and going always, of which I will avail myself. I have few friends left there, one or two though, most beloved. But London streets and faces cheer me inexpressibly, though of the latter, there should be not a known one remaining.

Thank you for your cordial reception of “*Elia*.” Inter nos, the “*Ariadne*” is not a darling with me; several incongruous things are in it, but in the composition it served me as illustration.

I want you in the “*Popular Fallacies*” \* to like the “*Home that is no home*,” and the “*Rising with the lark*.”

I am feeble, but cheerful in this my genial hot weather. Walked sixteen miles yesterday. I can't read much in summer time.

\* A series of articles contributed, under this title, by Lamb, to the “*New Monthly Magazine*.”

With my kindest love to all, and prayers for dear Dorothy,

I remain, most affectionately, yours,

C. LAMB.

At Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmont<sup>on</sup>, Middlesex.

Moxon has introduced Emma to Rogers, and he smiles upon the project. I have given E. my MILTON, (will you pardon me?\*) in part of a *portion*. It hangs famously in his Murray-like shop.

---

On the approach of the wedding-day, fixed for 30th July, Lamb turned to the account of a half-tearful merriment, the gift of a watch to the young lady whom he was about to lose.

TO MR. MOXON.

For God's sake give Emma no more watches; *one* has turned her head. She is arrogant and insulting. She said something very unpleasant to our old clock in the passage, as if he did not keep time, and yet he had made her no appointment.

\* It had been proposed by Lamb that Mr. W. should be the possessor of the portrait if he outlived his friend, and that afterwards it was to be bequeathed to Christ's College, Cambridge.

She takes it out every instant to look at the moment hand. She lugs us out into the fields, because there the bird-boys ask you, "Pray, sir, can you tell us what's o'clock?" and she answers them punctually. She loses all her time looking to see "what the time is." I overheard her whispering, "Just so many hours, minutes, &c., to Tuesday; I think St. George's goes too slow." This little present of Time!—why,—'tis Eternity to her!

What can make her so fond of a gingerbread watch?

She has spoiled some of the movements. Between ourselves, she has kissed away "half-past twelve," which I suppose to be the canonical hour in Hanover Square.

Well, if "love me, love my watch" answers, she will keep time to you.

It goes right by the Horse Guards.

DEAREST M.,

Never mind opposite\* nonsense. She does not love you for the watch, but the watch for you. I will be at the wedding, and keep the 30th July,

\* Written on the opposite page to that in which the previous affectionate banter appears.

as long as my poor months last me, as a festival, gloriously.

Yours, ever,

ELIA.

We have not heard from Cambridge. I will write the moment we do.

Edmonton, 24th July, twenty minutes past three by Emma's watch.

---

Miss Lamb was in the sad state of mental estrangement up to the day of the wedding; but then in the constant companionship of her brother at Edmonton. The following cluster of little letters to the new married pair—the first from Charles, introducing one from Mary—shows the happy effect of the news on her mental health.

TO MR. AND MRS. MOXON.

DEAR MR. AND MRS. MOXON,

Time very short. I wrote to Miss Fryer, and had the sweetest letter about you, Emma, that ever friendship dictated. "I am full of good wishes, I am crying with good wishes," she says; but you shall see it.

DEAR MOXON,

I take your writing most kindly, and shall most kindly your writing from Paris.

I want to crowd another letter to Miss Fryer into the little time after dinner, before post time. So with twenty thousand congratulations,

Yours,

C. L.

I am calm, sober, happy. Turn over for the reason. I got home from Dover Street, by Evans, *half as sober as a judge*. I am turning over a new leaf, as I hope you will now.

The turn of the leaf presented the following from Miss Lamb :—

MY DEAR EMMA AND EDWARD MOXON,

Accept my sincere congratulations, and imagine more good wishes than my weak nerves will let me put into good set words. The dreary blank of *unanswered questions* which I ventured to ask in vain, was cleared up on the wedding day by Mrs. W.\* taking a glass of wine, and, with a total

\* The wife of the landlord of the house at Edmonton.

change of countenance, begging leave to drink Mr. and Mrs. Moxon's good health. It restored me from that moment, as if by an electrical stroke, to the entire possession of my senses. I never felt so calm and quiet after a similar illness as I do now. I feel as if all tears were wiped from my eyes, and all care from my heart.

MARY LAMB.

At the foot of this letter is the following by Charles :—

*Wednesday.*

DEARS, AGAIN,

Your letter interrupted a seventh game at piquet which *we* were having, after walking to WRIGHT'S and purchasing shoes. We pass our time in cards, walks, and reading. We attack Tasso soon.

C. L.

Never was such a calm, or such a recovery. 'Tis her own words, undictated.

---

Miss Lamb did not escape all the cares of house-

keeping by the new arrangement ; the following little note shows the grotesque uses to which Lamb turned the smaller household anxieties :—

TO MR. MOXON.

DEAR M.,

Mary and I are very poorly. We have had a sick child, who, sleeping or not sleeping, next me, with a pasteboard partition between, killed my sleep. The little bastard is gone. My bedfellows are cough and cramp ; we sleep three in a bed. Domestic arrangements (baker, butcher, and all) devolve on Mary. Don't come yet to this house of pest and age ! We propose, when you and E. agree for the time, to come up and meet you at the B——'s, say a week hence, but do you make the appointment.

Mind, our spirits are good, and we are happy in your happinesses.

C. L.

Our old and ever new loves to dear Emma.

The following is Lamb's reply to a welcome communication of Sonnets, addressed by the bridegroom to the fair object of Lamb's regard—beautiful in themselves—and endeared to Lamb by honoured memories and generous hopes :—

## TO MR. MOXON.

Mary is of opinion with me, that two of these Sonnets are of a higher grade than any poetry you have done yet. The one to Emma is so pretty ! I have only allowed myself to transpose a word in the third line. Sacred shall it be from any intermeddling of mine. But we jointly beg that you will make four lines in the room of the four last. Read "Darby and Joan," in Mrs. Moxon's first album. There you'll see how beautiful in age the looking back to youthful years in an old couple is. But it is a violence to the feelings to anticipate that time in youth. I hope you and Emma will have many a quarrel, and many a make-up (and she is beautiful in reconciliation !) before the dark days shall come, in which ye shall say "there is small comfort in them." You have begun a sort of

character of Emma in them, very sweetly; carry it on, if you can, through the last lines.

I love the sonnet to my heart, and you *shall* finish it, and I'll be hanged if I furnish a line towards it. So much for that. The next best is the Ocean

“Ye gallant winds, if e'er your LUSTY CHEEKS  
Blew longing lover to his mistress' side,  
O, puff your loudest, spread the canvas wide,”

is spirited. The last line I altered, and have re-altered it as it stood. It is closer. These two are your best. But take a good deal of time in finishing the first. How proud should Emma be of her poets!

Perhaps “O Ocean” (though I like it) is too much of the open vowels, which Pope objects to. “Great Ocean!” is obvious. To save sad thoughts I think is better (though not good) than for the mind to save herself. But 'tis a noble Sonnet. “St. Cloud” I have no fault to find with.

If I return the Sonnets, think it no disrespect, for I look for a printed copy. You have done better than ever. And now for a reason I did not notice them earlier. On Wednesday they came, and on Wednesday I was a-gadding. Mary

gave me a holiday, and I set off to Snow Hill. From Snow Hill I deliberately was marching down, with noble Holborn before me, framing in mental agitation a map of the dear London in prospect, thinking to traverse Wardour Street, &c., when, diabolically, I was interrupted by a too hospitable friend, and prevailed on to spend the day at his friendly house, where was an album, and (O, march of intellect!) plenty of literary conversation, and more acquaintance with the state of modern poetry than I could keep up with. I was positively distanced. Knowles' play, which, epilogued by me, lay on the PIANO, alone made me hold up my head. When I came home, I read your letter, and glimpsed at your beautiful sonnet,

“ Fair art thou as the morning, my young bride,”

and dwelt upon it in a confused brain, but determined not to open them till next day, being in a state not to be told of at Chatteris. Tell it not in Gath, Emma, lest the daughters triumph! I am at the end of my tether. I wish you could come on Tuesday with your fair bride. Why can't you? Do. We are thankful to your sister for being of the party. Come, and *bring* a sonnet on

Mary's birthday. Love to the whole Moxonry, and tell E. I every day love her more, and miss her less. Tell her so from her loving uncle, as she has let me call her. I bought a fine embossed card 'yesterday, and wrote for a fair lady's album. She is a Miss Brown, engaged to a Mr. White. One of the lines was (I forgot the rest—but she had them at twenty-four hours' notice; she is going out to India with her husband) :—

“ May your fame,  
And fortune, Frances, WHITEN with your name ! ”

Not bad as a pun. I *will* expect you before two on Tuesday. I am well and happy, tell E.

---

Lamb's latter days were brightened by the frequent — latterly periodical — hospitality of the admirable translator of Dante, at the British Museum. The following was addressed to this new friend lately acquired, but who became an old friend at once, while Mr. and Mrs. Moxon were on their wedding tour :—

TO REV. H. F. CARY.

DEAR SIR,

Your packet I have only just received, owing, I suppose, to the absence of Moxon, who is flaunting it about *à la Parisienne*, with his new bride our Emma, much to his satisfaction, and not a little to our dulness. We shall be quite well by the time you return from Worcestershire, and most, most (observe the repetition) glad to see you here, or anywhere.

I will take my time with D——'s act. I wish poets would write a little plainer; he begins some of his words with a letter which is unknown to the typography.

Yours, most truly,

C. LAMB.

P.S.—Pray let me know when you return. We are at Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmonton; no longer at Enfield. You will be amused to hear that my sister and I have, with the aid of Emma, scrambled through the "*Inferno*," by the blessed furtherance of your polar star translation. I think we scarce left anything unmadeout. But our

partner has left us, and we have not yet resumed. Mary's chief pride in it was that she should some day brag of it to you. Your "Dante" and Sandys' "Ovid" are the only helpmates of translations. Neither of you shirk a word.

Fairfax's "Tasso" is no translation at all. It is better in some places, but it merely observes the number of stanzas; as for images, similes, &c., he finds 'em himself, and never "troubles Peter for the matter."

In haste, dear Cary,

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

Has M. sent you "Elia," second volume? if not, he shall.

*Sept. 9, 1833.*

The following is Lamb's letter of acknowledgment to the author of the "Pleasures of Memory," for an early copy of his "Illustrated Poems," of a share in the publication of which, Mr. Moxon was "justly vain." The artistical allusions are to Stothard; the allusions to the poet's own kindnesses need no explanation to those who have

been enabled by circumstances, which now and then transpire, to guess at the generous course of his life.

TO MR. ROGERS.

*Saturday.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Your book, by the unremitting punctuality of your publisher, has reached me thus early. I have not opened it, nor will till to-morrow, when I promise myself a thorough reading of it. The "Pleasures of Memory" was the first school-present I made to Mrs. Moxon; it has those nice woodcuts, and I believe she keeps it still. Believe me, all the kindness you have shown to the husband of that excellent person seems done unto myself. I have tried my hand at a sonnet, in the Times. But the turn I gave it, though I hoped it would not displease you, I thought might not be equally agreeable to your artist. I met that dear old man at poor Henry's, with you, and again at Cary's, and it was sublime to see him sit, deaf, and enjoy all that was going on in mirth with the company. He reposed upon the many graceful, many fantastic images he had created; with

them he dined, and took wine. I have ventured at an antagonist copy of verses, in the Athenæum, to *him*, in which he is as everything, and you as nothing. He is no lawyer who cannot take two sides. But I am jealous of the combination of the sister arts. Let them sparkle apart. What injury (short of theatres) did not Boydell's Shakspeare Gallery do me with Shakspeare? to have Opie's Shakspeare, Northcote's Shakspeare, wooden-headed West's Shakspeare, (though he did the best in Lear), deaf-headed Reynolds's Shakspeare, instead of any, and everybody's Shakspeare; to be tied down to an authentic face of Juliet! to have Imogen's portrait! to confine the illimitable! I like you and Stothard, (you best) but "out upon this half-faced fellowship!" Sir, when I have read the book, I may trouble you, through Moxon, with some faint criticisms. It is not the flattering compliment in a letter to an author to say, you have not read his book yet. But the devil of a reader he must be, who prances through it in five minutes; and no longer have I received the parcel. It was a little tantalizing to me to receive a letter from Landor, *Gebir* Landor, from Florence, to say he was just sitting down to read my "Elia," just

received; but the letter was to go out before the reading. There are calamities in authorship, which only authors know. I am going to call on Moxon, on Monday, if the throng of carriages in Dover Street, on the morn of publication, do not "barricade me out.

With many thanks, and most respectful remembrances to your sister,

Yours,

C. LAMB.

Have you seen Coleridge's happy exemplification in English of the Ovidian Elegiac metre?

In the Hexameter rises the fountain's silvery current,  
In the Pentameter aye falling in melody down.

My sister is papering up the book—careful soul!

---

Lamb and his sister were now, for the last year of their united lives, always together. What his feelings were in this companionship, when his beloved associate was deprived of reason, will be seen in the following most affecting letter, to an old schoolfellow and very dear friend of Mrs. Moxon's—since dead—who took an earnest interest in their welfare.

TO MISS FRYER.

*Feb. 14, 1834.*

DEAR MISS FRYER,

Your letter found me just returned from keeping my birthday (pretty innocent!) at Dover Street. I see them pretty often. I have since had letters of business to write, or should have replied earlier. In one word, be less uneasy about me: I bear my privations very well; I am not in the depths of desolation, as heretofore. Your admonitions are not lost upon me. Your kindness has sunk into my heart. Have faith in me! It is no new thing for me to be left to my sister. When she is not violent, her rambling chat is better to me than the sense and sanity of this world. Her heart is obscured, not buried; it breaks out occasionally; and one can discern a strong mind struggling with the billows that have gone over it. I could be nowhere happier than under the same roof with her. Her memory is unnaturally strong; and from ages past, if we may so call the earliest records of our poor life, she fetches thousands of names and things that never would have dawned upon me again, and thousands from the

ten years she lived before me. What took place from early girlhood to her coming of age principally, live again (every important thing and every trifle) in her brain, with the vividness of real presence. For twelve hours incessantly she<sup>e</sup> will pour out without intermission, all her past life, forgetting nothing, pouring out name after name to the Waldens, as a dream; sense and nonsense; truths and errors huddled<sup>e</sup> together; a medley between inspiration and possession. What things we are! I know you will bear with me talking of these things. It seems to ease me, for I have nobody to tell these things to now. Emma, I see, has got a harp, and is learning to play. She has framed her three Walton pictures, and pretty they look. That is a book you should read; such sweet religion in it, next to Woolman's; though the subject be baits, and hooks, and worms, and fishes. She has my copy at present, to do two more from.

Very, very tired I began this epistle, having been epistolising all the morning, and very kindly would I end it, could I find adequate expressions to your kindness. We did set our minds on seeing you in spring. One of us will indubitably. But I am not skilled in almanac learning, to know when

spring precisely begins and ends. Pardon my blots ; I am glad you like your book. I wish it had been half as worthy of your acceptance as John Woolman. But 'tis a good-natured book.

---

A few days afterwards Lamb's passionate desire to serve a most deserving friend broke out in the following earnest little letter :—

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

CHURCH STREET, EDMONTON,  
*February 22.*

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I write from a house of mourning. The oldest and best friends I have left are in trouble. A branch of them (and they of the best stock of God's creatures, I believe) is establishing a school at Carlisle ; her name is L—— M—— ; her address, 75, Castle Street, Carlisle ; her qualities (and her motives for this exertion) are the most amiable, most upright. For thirty years she has been tried by me, and, on her behaviour, I would stake my soul. O, if you could recommend her, how would I love you—if I could love you better ! Pray,

pray, recommend her. She is as good a human creature,—next to my sister, perhaps, the most exemplary female I ever knew. Moxon tells me you would like a letter from me; you shall have one. *This* I cannot mingle up with any nonsense which you usually tolerate from C. Lamb. Need he add loves to wife, sister, and all? Poor Mary is ill again, after a short lucid interval of four or five months. In short I may call her half dead to me. How good you are to me! Yours with fervour of friendship for ever, C. L.

If you want references, the Bishop of Carlisle may be one. L——'s sister (as good as she, she can't be better though she tries) educated the daughters of the late Earl of Carnarvon, and he settled a handsome annuity on her for life. In short, all the family are a sound rock.

---

A quiet dinner at the British Museum with Mr. Cary once a-month, to which Lamb looked forward with almost boyish eagerness, was now almost his only festival. In a little note to his host about this time, he hints at one of his few physical tastes.

—"We are thinking," he says, "of roast *shoulder* of mutton with onion sauce, but I scorn to prescribe to the hospitalities of mine host." The following, after these festivities had been interrupted by Mr. Cary's visit to the Continent, is their last memorial:—

TO MR. CARY.

"

Sept. 12, 1834.

"By Cot's plessing we will not be absence at the grace."

DEAR C.,

We long to see you, and hear account of your peregrinations, of the Tun at Heidelberg, the Clock at Strasburg, the statue at Rotterdam, the dainty Rhenish, and poignant Moselle wines, Westphalian hams, and Botargoes of Altona. But perhaps you have seen, not tasted any of these things.

Yours, very glad to chain you back again to your proper centre, books, and Bibliothecæ.

C. and M. LAMB.

I have only got your note just now *per negligentiam perinqui Moxoni*.

The following little note has a mournful interest, as Lamb's last scrap of writing. It is dated on the very day on which erysipelas followed the accident, apparently trifling, which, five days after, terminated in his death. It is addressed to the wife of his oldest surviving friend :—

TO MRS. DYER.

DEAR MRS. DYER,

I am very uneasy about a *Book* which I either have lost, or left at your house on Thursday. It was the book I went out to fetch from Miss Buffam's, while the tripe was frying. It is called "Phillips's *Theatrum Poetarum*," but it is an English book. I think I left it in the parlour. It is Mr. Cary's book, and I would not lose it for the world. Pray if you find it, book it at the Swan, Snow Hill, by an Edmonton stage immediately, directed to Mr. Lamb, Church Street, Edmonton, or write to say you cannot find it. I am quite anxious about it. If it is lost, I shall never like tripe again.

With kindest love to Mr. Dyer and all,

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Dec. 22, 1834.

## CHAPTER THE LAST.

LAMB'S WEDNESDAY NIGHTS COMPARED WITH THE EVENINGS OF  
HOLLAND HOUSE—HIS DEAD COMPANIONS, DYER, GODWIN,  
THELWALL, HAZLITT, BARNES, HAYDON, COLERIDGE, AND OTHERS  
—LAST GLIMPSES OF CHARLES AND MARY LAMB.

---

“GONE ; ALL ARE GONE, THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES !”

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Two circles of rare social enjoyment—differing as widely as possible in all external circumstances—but each superior in its kind to all others, were at the same time generously opened to men of letters—now existing only in the memories of those who are fast departing from us—may, without offence, be placed side by side in grateful recollection ; they are the dinners at Holland House and the suppers of “the Lambs” at the Temple, Great Russell Street, and Islington. Strange, at first, as this juxta-position may seem, a little reflection will convince the few survivors who have enjoyed both, that it involves no injustice to either ; while with

those who are too young to have been admitted to these old festivities, we may exercise the privilege of age by boasting what good fellowship was once enjoyed, and what "good talk" there was once in the world!

But let us call to mind the aspects of each scene, before we attempt to tell of the conversation, which will be harder to recall and impossible to characterise. And first, let us invite the reader to assist at a dinner at Holland House in the height of the London and Parliamentary season, say a Saturday in June. It is scarcely seven—for the luxuries of the house are enhanced by a punctuality in the main object of the day, which yields to no dilatory guest of whatever pretension—and you are seated in an oblong room, rich in old gilding, opposite a deep recess, pierced by large old windows through which the rich branches of trees bathed in golden light, just admit the faint outline of the Surrey Hills. Among the guests are some perhaps of the highest rank, always some of high political importance, about whom the interest of busy life gathers, intermixed with others eminent already in literature or art, or of that dawning promise which the hostess delights to discover and the host to smile

on. All are assembled for the purpose of enjoyment ; the anxieties of the minister, the feverish struggles of the partisan, the silent toils of the artist or critic, are finished for the week ; professional and literary jealousies are hushed ; sickness, decrepitude and death, are silently voted shadows ; and the brilliant assemblage is prepared to exercise to the highest degree the extraordinary privilege of mortals to live in the knowledge of mortality without its consciousness, and to people the present hour with delights, as if a man lived and laughed and enjoyed in this world for ever. Every appliance of physical luxury which the most delicate art can supply, attends on each ; every faint wish which luxury creates is anticipated ; the noblest and most gracious countenance in the world smiles over the happiness it is diffusing, and redoubles it by cordial invitations and encouraging words, which set the humblest stranger guest at perfect ease. As the dinner merges into the dessert, and the sunset casts a richer glow on the branches, still, or lightly waving in the evening light, and on the scene within, the harmony of all sensations becomes more perfect ; a delighted and delighting chuckle invites attention to some joyous sally of the richest intel-

lectual wit reflected in the faces of all, even to the favourite page ingreen, who attends his mistress with duty like that of the antique world; the choicest wines are enhanced in their liberal but temperate use by the vista opened in Lord Holland's tales of bacchanalian evenings at Brookes's, with Fox and Sheridan, when potations deeper and more serious rewarded the Statesman's toils and shortened his days; until at length the serene pleasure of conversation, of the now carelessly scattered groups, is enjoyed in that old, long, unrivalled library in which Addison drank, and mused, and wrote; where every living grace attends; "and more than echoes talk along the walls." One happy peculiarity of these assemblies was, the number of persons in different stations and of various celebrity, who were gratified by seeing, still more, in hearing and knowing each other; the statesman was relieved by association with the poet of whom he had heard and partially read; and the poet was elevated by the courtesy which "bared the *great heart*" which "beats beneath a star;" and each felt, not rarely, the true dignity of the other, modestly expanding under the most genial auspices.

Now turn to No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, at ten

o'clock, when the sedater part of the company are assembled, and the happier stragglers are dropping in from the play. Let it be any autumn or winter month, when the fire is blazing steadily, and the clean-swept hearth and whist-tables speak of the spirit of Mrs. Battle, and serious looks require "the rigor of the game." The furniture is old-fashioned and worn; the ceiling low, and not wholly unstained by traces of "the great plant," though now virtuously forborne: but the Hogarths, in narrow black frames, abounding in infinite thought, humour and pathos, enrich the walls; and all things wear an air of comfort and hearty English welcome. Lamb himself, yet unrelaxed by the glass, is sitting with a sort of Quaker primness at the whist-table, the gentleness of his melancholy smile half lost in his intentness on the game; his partner, the author of "Political Justice," (the majestic expression of his large head not disturbed by disproportion of his comparatively diminutive stature,) is regarding his hand with a philosophic but not a careless eye; Captain Burney, only not venerable because so young in spirit, sits between them; and H. C. R., who alone now and then breaks the proper silence, to welcome some

incoming guest, is his happy partner—true winner in the game of life, whose leisure achieved early, is devoted to his friends. At another table, just beyond the circle which extends from the fire, sit another four. The broad, burly, jovial bulk of John Lamb, the Ajax Telamon of the slender clerks of the old South Sea House, whom he sometimes introduces to the rooms of his younger brother, surprised to learn from them that he is growing famous, confronts the stately but courteous Alsager; while P., “his few hairs bristling” at gentle objurgation, watches his partner M. B., dealing, with “soul more white” \* than the hands of which Lamb once said, “M., if dirt was trumps, what hands you would hold!” In one corner of the room, you may see the pale earnest countenance of Charles Lloyd, who is discoursing “of fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,” with Leigh Hunt; and, if you choose to listen, you will scarcely know which most to admire—the severe logic of the melancholy reasoner, or its graceful evasion by the tricksome fantasy of the joyous poet. Basil Montague, gentle

\* Lamb’s Sonnet, dedicatory of his first volume of prose to this cherished friend, thus concludes:—

“Free from self-seeking, envy, low design,

I have not found a whiter soul than thine.”

enthusiast in the cause of humanity, which he has lived to see triumphant, is pouring into the outstretched ear of George Dyer some tale of legalised injustice, which the recipient is vainly endeavouring to comprehend. Soon the room fills; in *slouches* Hazlitt from the theatre, where his stubborn anger for Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo has been softened by Miss Stephens's angelic notes, which might "chase anger, and grief, and fear, and sorrow, and pain from mortal or immortal minds;" Kenney, with a tremulous pleasure, announces that there is a crowded house to the ninth representation of his new comedy, of which Lamb lays down his cards to inquire; or Ayrton, mildly radiant, whispers the continual triumph of "Don Giovanni," for which Lamb, incapable of opera, is happy to take his word. Now and then an actor glances on us from "the rich Cathay" of the world behind the scenes, with news of its brighter human-kind, and with looks reflecting the public favour—Liston, grave beneath the weight of the town's regards—or Miss Kelly, unexhausted in spirit by alternating the drolleries of high farce with the terrible pathos of melodrama,—or Charles Kemble mirrors the chivalry of thought, and ennobles the party by bending

on them looks beaming with the aristocracy of nature. Meanwhile Becky lays the cloth on the side-table, under the direction of the most quiet, sensible, and kind of women—who soon compels the younger and more hungry of the guests to partake largely of the cold roast lamb or boiled beef, the heaps of smoking roasted potatoes, and the vast jug of porter, often replenished from the foaming pots, which the best tap of Fleet Street supplies. Perfect freedom prevails, save when the hospitable pressure of the mistress excuses excess; and perhaps, the physical enjoyment of the play-goer exhausted with pleasure, or of the author jaded with the labour of the brain, is not less than that of the guests at the most charming of aristocratic banquets. As the hot water and its accompaniments appear, and the severities of whist relax, the light of conversation thickens: Hazlitt, catching the influence of the spirit from which he has just begun to abstain, utters some fine criticism with struggling emphasis; Lamb stammers out puns suggestive of wisdom, for happy Barron Field to admire and echo; the various dribblets of talk combine into a stream, while Miss Lamb moves gently about to see that each modest stranger is duly served; turning, now

and then, an anxious loving eye on Charles, which is softened into a half-humorous expression of resignation to inevitable fate, as he mixes his second tumbler! This is on ordinary nights, when the accustomed Wednesday-men assemble; but there is a difference on great extra nights, gladdened by "the bright visitations" of Wordsworth or Coleridge:—the cordiality of the welcome is the same, but a sedater wisdom prevails. Happy hours were they for the young disciple of the then desperate, now triumphant cause of Wordsworth's genius, to be admitted to the presence of the poet who had opened a new world for him in the undiscovered riches of his own nature, and its affinities with the outer universe; whom he worshipped the more devoutly for the world's scorn; for whom he felt the future in the instant, and anticipated the "All hail hereafter!" which the great poet has lived to enjoy! To win him to speak of his own poetry—to hear him recite its noblest passages—and to join in his brave defiance of the fashion of the age—was the solemn pleasure of such a season; and, of course, superseded all minor disquisitions. So, when Coleridge came, argument, wit, humour, criticism were hushed; the pertest, smartest, and the cleverest

felt that all were assembled to listen; and if a card-table had been filled, or a dispute begun before he was excited to continuous speech, his gentle voice, undulating in music, soon

“Suspended *whist*, and took with ravishment

The thronging audience.”

The conversation which animated each of these memorable circles, approximated, in essence, much more nearly than might be surmised from the difference in station of the principal talkers and the contrast in physical appliances; that of the bowered saloon of Holland House having more of earnestness and depth, and that of the Temple-attic more of airy grace than would be predicated by a superficial observer. The former possessed the peculiar interest of directly bordering on the scene of political conflict—gathering together the most eloquent leaders of the Whig party, whose eager repose from energetic action spoke of the week's conflict, and in whom the moment's enjoyment derived a peculiar charm from the perilous glories of the struggle which the morrow was to renew—when power was just within reach, or held with a convulsive grasp—like the eager and solemn pleasure of the soldiers' banquet in the pause of

victory. The pervading spirit of Lamb's parties was also that of social progress; but it was the spirit of the dreamers and thinkers, not of the combatants of the world—men who, it may be, drew their theories from a deeper range of meditation, and embraced the future with more comprehensive hope—but about whom the immediate interest of party did not gather; whose victories were all within; whose rewards were visions of blessings for their species in the furthest horizon of hope. If a profounder thought was sometimes dragged to light in the dim circle of Lamb's companions than was native to the brighter sphere, it was still a rare felicity to watch there the union of elegance with purpose in some leader of party—the delicate, almost fragile grace of illustration in some one, perhaps destined to lead advancing multitudes or to withstand their rashness;—to observe the growth of strength in the midst of beauty expanding from the sense of the heroic past, as the famed Basil tree of Boccaccio grew from the immolated relic beneath it. If the alternations in the former oscillated between wider extremes, touching on the wildest farce and most earnest tragedy of life; the rich space of brilliant

comedy which lived ever between them in the latter, was diversified by serious interests and heroic allusions. Sydney Smith's wit—not so wild, so grotesque, so deep-searching as Lamb's—had even more quickness of intellectual demonstration; wedded moral and political wisdom to happiest language, with a more rapid perception of secret affinities; was capable of producing epigrammatic splendour reflected more permanently in the mind, than the fantastic brilliancy of those rich conceits which Lamb stammered out with his painful smile. Mackintosh might vie with Coleridge in vast and various knowledge; but there the competition between these great talkers would end, and the contrast begin; the contrast between facility and inspiration; between the ready access to each ticketed and labelled compartment of history, science, art, criticism, and the genius that fused and renovated all. But then a younger spirit appeared at Lord Holland's table to redress the balance—not so poetical as Coleridge, but more lucid—in whose vast and joyous memory all the mighty past lived and glowed anew; whose declamations presented, not groups tinged with distant light, like those of Coleridge, but a series of historical

figures in relief, presented in bright succession—the embossed surfaces of heroic life.\* Rogers too, was there—connecting the literature of the last

\* I take leave to copy the glowing picture of the evenings of Holland House and of its admirable master, drawn by this favourite guest himself, from an article which adorned the “Edinburgh Review,” just after Lord Holland’s death.

“The time is coming when, perhaps, a few old men, the last survivors of our generation, will in vain seek, amidst new streets, and squares, and railway stations, for the site of that dwelling which was in their youth the favourite resort of wits and beauties—of painters and poets—of scholars, philosophers, and statesmen. They will then remember, with strange tenderness, many objects once familiar to them—the avenue and the terrace, the busts and the paintings; the carving, the grotesque gilding, and the enigmatical mottoes. With peculiar fondness, they will recall that venerable chamber, in which all the antique gravity of a college library was so singularly blended with all that female grace and wit could devise to embellish a drawing-room. They will recollect, not unmoved, those shelves loaded with the varied learning of many lands and many ages; those portraits in which were preserved the features of the best and wisest Englishmen of two generations. They will recollect how many men who have guided the politics of Europe—who have moved great assemblies by reason and eloquence—who have put life into bronze and canvas, or who have left to posterity things so written as it shall not willingly let them die—were there mixed with all that was loveliest and gayest in the society of the most splendid of capitals. They will remember the singular character which belonged to that circle, in which every talent and accomplishment, every art and science, had its place. They will remember how the last debate was discussed in one corner, and the last comedy of Scribe in another; while Wilkie gazed with modest admiration on Reynolds’ Baretta; while Mackintosh turned over Thomas Aquinas to verify a quotation;

age with this, partaking of some of the best characteristics of both—whose first poem sparkled in the closing darkness of the last century “like a rich jewel in an Ethiop’s ear,” and who was advancing from a youth which had anticipated memory, to an age of kindness and hope ; and Moore, who paused

while Talleyrand related his conversations with Barras at the Luxemburg, or his ride with Lannes over the field of Austerlitz. They will remember, above all, the grace—and the kindness, far more admirable than grace—with which the princely hospitality of that ancient mansion was dispensed. They will remember the venerable and benignant countenance, and the cordial voice of him who bade them welcome. They will remember that temper which years of pain, of sickness, of lameness, of confinement, seemed only to make sweeter and sweeter ; and that frank politeness, which at once relieved all the embarrassment of the youngest and most timid writer or artist, who found himself for the first time among Ambassadors and Earls. They will remember that constant flow of conversation, so natural, so animated, so various, so rich with observation and anecdote ; that wit which never gave a wound ; that exquisite mimicry which ennobled, instead of degrading ; that goodness of heart which appeared in every look and accent, and gave additional value to every talent and acquirement. They will remember, too, that he whose name they hold in reverence was not less distinguished by the inflexible uprightness of his political conduct, than by his loving disposition and his winning manners. They will remember that, in the last lines which he traced, he expressed his joy that he had done nothing unworthy of the friend of Fox and Grey ; and they will have reason to feel similar joy, if, in looking back on many troubled years, they cannot accuse themselves of having done anything unworthy of men who were distinguished by the friendship of Lord Holland.”

in the fluttering expression of graceful trifles, to whisper some deep-toned thought of Ireland's wrongs and sorrows.

Literature and Art supplied the favourite topics to each of these assemblies,—both discussed with earnest admiration, but surveyed in different aspects. The conversation at Lord Holland's was wont to mirror the happiest aspects of the living mind ; to celebrate the latest discoveries in science ; to echo the quarterly decisions of imperial criticism ; to reflect the modest glow of young reputations ;—all was gay, graceful, decisive, as if the pen of Jeffrey could have spoken ; or, if it reverted to old times, it rejoiced in those classical associations which are ever young. At Lamb's, on the other hand, the topics were chiefly sought among the obscure and remote ; the odd, the quaint, the fantastic were drawn out from their dusty recesses ; nothing could be more foreign to its embrace than the modern circulating library, even when it teemed with the Scotch novels. Whatever the subject was, however, in the more aristocratic, or the humbler sphere, it was always discussed by those best entitled to talk on it ; no others had a chance of being heard. This remarkable freedom from *bored* was produced

in Lamb's circle by the authoritative texture of its commanding minds ; in Lord Holland's, by the more direct, and more genial influence of the hostess, which checked that tenacity of subject and opinion which sometimes broke the charm of Lamb's parties by "a duel in the form of a debate." Perhaps beyond any other hostess,—certainly far beyond any host, Lady Holland possessed the tact of perceiving, and the power of evoking the various capacities which lurked in every part of the brilliant circles over which she presided, and restrained each to its appropriate sphere, and portion of the evening. To enkindle the enthusiasm of an artist on the theme over which he had achieved the most facile mastery ; to set loose the heart of the rustic poet, and imbue his speech with the freedom of his native hills ; to draw from the adventurous traveller a breathing picture of his most imminent danger ; or to embolden the bashful soldier to disclose his own share in the perils and glories of some famous battle-field ; to encourage the generous praise of friendship when the speaker and the subject reflected interest on each other ; or win from an awkward man of science the secret history of a discovery which had astonished

the world; to conduct these brilliant developments to the height of satisfaction, and then to shift the scene by the magic of a word, were among her nightly successes. And if this extraordinary power over the elements of social enjoyment was sometimes wielded without the entire concealment of its despotism; if a decisive check sometimes rebuked a speaker who might intercept the variegated beauty of Jeffrey's indulgent criticism, or the jest announced and self-rewarded in Sydney Smith's cordial and triumphant laugh, the authority was too clearly exerted for the evening's prosperity, and too manifestly impelled by an urgent consciousness of the value of these golden hours which were fleeting within its confines, to sadden the enforced silence with more than a momentary regret. If ever her prohibition,—clear, abrupt, and decisive,—indicated more than a preferable regard for livelier discourse, it was when a depreciatory tone was adopted towards genius, or goodness, or honest endeavour, or when some friend, personal or intellectual, was mentioned in slighting phrase. Habituated to a generous partisanship, by strong sympathy with a great political cause, she carried the fidelity of her

devotion to that cause into her social relations, and was ever the truest and the fastest of friends. The tendency, often more idle than malicious, to soften down the intellectual claims of the absent, which so insidiously besets literary conversation, and teaches a superficial insincerity, even to substantial esteem and regard, and which was sometimes insinuated into the conversation of Lamb's friends, though never into his own, found no favour in her presence; and hence the conversations over which she presided, perhaps beyond all that ever flashed with a kindred splendour, were marked by that integrity of good nature which might admit of their exact repetition to every living individual whose merits were discussed, without the danger of inflicting pain. Under her auspices, not only all critical, but all personal talk was tinged with kindness; the strong interest which she took in the happiness of her friends, shed a peculiar sunniness over the aspects of life presented by the common topics of alliances, and marriages, and promotions; and there was not a hopeful engagement, or a happy wedding, or a promotion of a friend's son, or a new intellectual triumph of any youth with whose name and history she was familiar, but

became an event on which she expected and required congratulation as on a part of her own fortune. Although there was necessarily a preponderance in her society of the sentiment of popular progress, which once was cherished almost exclusively by the party to whom Lord Holland was united by sacred ties, no expression of triumph in success, no virulence in sudden disappointment, was ever permitted to wound the most sensitive ears of her conservative guests. It might be that some placid comparison of recent with former times, spoke a sense of freedom's peaceful victory; or that, on the giddy edge of some great party struggle, the festivities of the evening might take a more serious cast, as news arrived from the scene of contest, and the pleasure might be deepened by the peril; but the feeling was always restrained by the supremacy given to those permanent solaces for the mind, in the beautiful and the great, which no political changes could disturb. Although the death of the noble master of the venerated mansion closed its portals for ever on the exquisite enjoyments to which they had been so generously expanded, the art of conversation lived a little longer in the smaller circle which

Lady Holland still drew almost daily around her; honouring his memory by following his example, and struggling against the perpetual sense of unutterable bereavement, by rendering to literature that honour, and those reliefs, which English aristocracy has too often denied it; and seeking consolation in making others proud and happy. That lingering happiness is extinct now; Lamb's kindred circle—kindred, though so different—dispersed almost before he died; the “thoughts that wandered through eternity,” are no longer expressed in time; the fancies and conceits, “gay creatures of the element” of social delight, “that in the colours of the rainbow lived, and played in the plighted clouds,” flicker only in the backward perspective of waning years; and for the survivors, I may venture to affirm, no such conversation as they have shared in either circle will ever be theirs again in this world.

Before closing these last memorials of Charles and Mary Lamb, it may not be unfitting to glance separately at some of the friends who are grouped around them in memory, and who, like them, live only in recollection, and in the works they have left behind them.

GEORGE DYER was one of the first objects of Lamb's youthful reverence, for he had attained the stately rank of Grecian in the venerable school of Christ's Hospital, when Charles entered it, a little, timid, affectionate child; but this boyish respect, once amounting to awe, gave place to a familiar habit of loving banter, which, springing from the depths of old regard, approximated to school-boy roguery, and, now and then, though very rarely, gleamed on the consciousness of the ripe scholar. No contrast could be more vivid than that presented by the relations of each to the literature they both loved; one divining its inmost essences, plucking out the heart of its mysteries, shedding light on its dimmest recesses; the other devoted, with equal assiduity, to its externals. Books, to Dyer, "were a real world, both pure and good;" among them he passed, unconscious of time, from youth to extreme age, vegetating on their dates and forms, and "trivial fond records," in the learned air of great libraries, or the dusty confusion of his own, with the least possible apprehension of any human interest vital in their pages, or of any spirit of wit or fancy glancing across them. His life was an Academic

Pastoral. Methinks I see his gaunt, awkward form, set off by trousers too short, like those outgrown by a gawky lad, and a rusty coat as much too large for the wearer, hanging about him like those garments which the aristocratic Milesian peasantry prefer to the most comfortable rustic dress; his long head silvered over with short yet straggling hair, and his dark grey eyes glistening with faith and wonder, as Lamb satisfies the curiosity which has gently disturbed his studies as to the authorship of the Waverley Novels, by telling him, in the strictest confidence, that they are the works of Lord Castlereagh, just returned from the Congress of Sovereigns at Vienna! Off he runs, with animated stride and shambling enthusiasm, nor stops till he reaches Maida Hill, and breathes his news into the startled ear of Leigh Hunt, who, "as a public writer," ought to be possessed of the great fact with which George is laden! Or shall I endeavour to revive the bewildered look with which, just after he had been announced as one of Lord Stanhope's executors and residuary legatees, he received Lamb's grave inquiry, "Whether it was true, as commonly reported, that he was to be made a Lord?" "O dear no! Mr. Lamb," responded

he with earnest seriousness, but not without a moment's quivering vanity, "I could not think of such a thing; it is not true, I assure you." "I thought not," said Lamb, "and I contradict it wherever I go; but the government will not ask your consent; they may raise you to the peerage without your even knowing it." "I hope not, Mr. Lamb; indeed, indeed, I hope not; it would not suit me at all," responded Dyer, and went his way, musing on the possibility of a strange honour descending on his reluctant brow. Or shall I recall the visible presentment of his bland unconsciousness of evil when his sportive friend taxed it to the utmost, by suddenly asking what he thought of the murderer Williams, who, after destroying two families in Ratcliffe Highway, had broken prison by suicide, and whose body had just before been conveyed in shocking procession to its cross-road grave! The desperate attempt to compel the gentle optimist to speak ill of a mortal creature produced no happier success than the answer, "Why, I should think, Mr. Lamb, he must have been rather an eccentric character." This simplicity of a nature not only unspotted by the world, but almost abstracted from it, will seem the more

remarkable, when it is known that it was subjected, at the entrance of life, to a hard battle with fortune. Dyer was the son of very poor parents, residing in an eastern suburb of London, Stepney or Bethnal-greenward, where he attracted the attention of two elderly ladies as a serious child, with an extraordinary love for books. They obtained for him a presentation to Christ's Hospital, which he entered at seven years of age; fought his way through its sturdy ranks to its head; and, at nineteen, quitted it for Cambridge, with only an exhibition and his scholarly accomplishments to help him. On he went, however, placid if not rejoicing, through the difficulties of a life illustrated only by scholarship; encountering tremendous labours; unresting yet serene; until at eighty-five he breathed out the most blameless of lives, which began in a struggle to end in a learned dream!

Mr. Godwin, who during the happiest period of Lamb's weekly parties, was a constant assistant at his whist-table, resembled Dyer in simplicity of manner and devotion to letters; but the simplicity was more superficial, and the devotion more profound than the kindred qualities in the guileless scholar; and, instead of forming the entire being,

only marked the surface of a nature beneath which extraordinary power lay hidden. As the absence of worldly wisdom subjected Dyer to the sportive sallies of Lamb, so a like deficiency in Godwin exposed him to the coarser mirth of Mr. Horne Tooke, who was sometimes inclined to seek relaxation for the iron muscles of his imperturbable mind in trying to make a philosopher look foolish. To a stranger's gaze the author of the "Political Justice" and "Caleb Williams," as he appeared in the Temple, always an object of curiosity except to his familiars, presented none of those characteristics with which fancy had invested the daring speculator and relentless novelist ; nor, when he broke silence, did his language tend to reconcile the reality with the expectation. The disproportion of a frame which, low of stature, was surmounted by a massive head which might befit a presentable giant, was rendered almost imperceptible, not by any vivacity of expression, (for his countenance was rarely lighted up by the deep-seated genius within,) but by a gracious suavity of manner which many "a fine old English gentleman" might envy. His voice was small ; the topics of his ordinary conversation trivial, and discussed with a delicacy and

precision which might almost be mistaken for finical; and the presence of the most interesting persons in literary society, of which he had enjoyed the best, would not prevent him from falling after dinner into the most profound sleep. This gentle, drowsy, spiritless demeanour, presents a striking contrast to a reputation which once filled Europe with its echoes; but it was, in truth, when rightly understood, perfectly consistent with those intellectual elements which in some raised the most enthusiastic admiration, and from others elicited the wildest denunciations of visionary terror.

In Mr. Godwin's mind, the faculty of abstract reason so predominated over all others, as practically to extinguish them; and his taste, akin to this faculty, sought only for its development through the medium of composition for the press. He had no imagination, no fancy, no wit, no humour; or, if he possessed any of those faculties, they were obscured by that of pure reason; and being wholly devoid of the quick sensibility which irritates speech into eloquence, and of the passion for immediate excitement and applause, which tends to its presentment before admiring assemblies, he desired no other audience than that which he could silently

address, and learned to regard all things through a contemplative medium. In this sense, far more than in the extravagant application of his wildest theories, he levelled all around him; admitted no greatness but that of literature; and neither desired nor revered any triumphs but those of thought. If such a reasoning faculty, guided by such a disposition, had been applied to abstract sciences, no effect remarkable beyond that of rare excellence, would have been produced; but the apparent anomalies of Mr. Godwin's intellectual history arose from the application of his power to the passions, the interests, and the hopes of mankind, at a time when they enkindled into frightful action, and when he calmly worked out his problems among their burning elements with the "ice-brook's temper," and the severest logic. And if some extreme conclusions were inconsistent with the faith and the duty which alone can sustain and regulate our nature, there was no small compensation in the severity of the process to which the student was impelled, for the slender peril which might remain lest the results should be practically adopted. A system founded on pure reason, which rejected the impulses of natural affection, the delights of

gratitude, the influences of prejudice, the bondage of custom, the animation of personal hope; which appealed to no passion—which suggested no luxury—which excited no animosities—and which offered no prize for the observance of its laws, except a participation in the expanding glories of progressive humanity, was little calculated to allure from the accustomed paths of ancient ordinance any man disposed to walk in them by the lights from heaven. On the other hand, it was a healthful diversion from those seductions in which the heart secretly enervates and infects the understanding, to invite the revolutionary speculator to the contemplation of the distant and the refined; by the pursuit of impracticable error to brace the mind for the achievement of everlasting truth; and on the “heat and flame of the distemper” of an impassioned democracy to “sprinkle cool patience.” The idol, Political Justice, of which he was the slow and laborious architect, if it for a while enchanted, did not long enthrall or ever debase its worshippers; “its bones were marrowless, its blood was cold,”—but there was surely “speculation in its eyes” which “glared withall” into the future. Such high casuistry as it evoked has always an ennobling

tendency, even when it dallies with error; the direction of thought in youth is of less consequence than the mode of its exercise; and it is only when the base interests and sensual passions of mortality pander to the understanding that truth may fear for the issue.

The author of this cold and passionless intellectual phantasy looked out upon the world he hoped to inform from recesses of contemplation which the outward incidents of life did not disturb, and which, when closed, left him a common man, appearing to superficial observers rather below than above the level of ordinary talkers. To his inward gaze the stupendous changes which agitated Europe, at the time he wrote, were silent as a picture. The pleasure of his life was to think; its business was to write; all else in it was vanity. Regarding his own being through the same spiritualising medium, he saw no reason why the springs of its existence should wear out, and, in the spring-time of his speculation, held that man might become immortal on earth by the effort of the will. His style partook of the quality of his intellect and the character of its purposes—it was pure, simple, colourless. His most imaginative passages are inspired only by a

logic quickened into enthusiasm by the anticipation of the approaching discovery of truth—the dawning *Eureka* of the reasoner ; they are usually composed of “ line upon line, and precept upon precept,” without an involution of style or an eddy in the thought. He sometimes complained, though with the benignity that always marked his estimate of his opponents, that Mr. Malthus’s style was too richly ornamented for argument ; and certainly, with all its vivacity of illustration, it lacks the transparent simplicity of his own. The most palpable result which he ever produced by his writings was the dark theory in the first edition of the work on Population, which was presented as an answer to his reasoning on behalf of the perfectibility of man ; and he used to smile at his ultimate triumph, when the writer, who had only intended a striking paradox, tamed it down to the wisdom of economy, and adapted it to Poor-law uses ; neutralised his giant spectres of Vice and Misery by the practical intervention of Moral Restraint ; and left the optimist, Godwin, still in unclouded possession of the hope of universal peace and happiness, postponed only to that time when passion shall be subjected to reason, and population,

no more rising like a resistless tide, between adamantine barriers to submerge the renovated earth, shall obey the commands of wisdom; rise and fall as the means of subsistence expand or contract; and only contribute an impulse to the universal harmony.

The persons of Mr. Godwin's romances—stranger still—are the naked creations of the same intellectual power, marvellously endowed with galvanic life. Though with happier symmetry, they are as much made out of chains and links of reasoning, as the monster was fashioned by the chemistry of the student, in the celebrated novel of his gifted daughter. Falkland, and Caleb Williams, are the mere impersonations of the unbounded love of reputation, and resistless curiosity; these ideas are developed in each with masterly iteration—to the two ideas all causes give way; and materials are subjected, often of remarkable coarseness, to the refinement of the conception. Hazlitt used to observe of these two characters, that the manner they are played into each other, was equal to anything of the kind in the Drama; and there is no doubt that the opposition, though at the cost of probability, is most powerfully maintained: but the effect is partly owing to the absence of all extrinsic interest which

could interfere with the main purpose ; the beatings of the heart become audible, not only from their own intensity, but from the desolation which the author has expanded around them. The consistency in each is that of an idea, not of a character ; and if the effect of form and colour is produced, it is, as in line engraving, by the infinite minuteness and delicacy of the single strokes. In like manner, the incidents by which the author seeks to exemplify the wrongs inflicted by power on goodness in civilised society, are utterly fantastical ; nothing can be more minute, nothing more unreal ; the youth being involved by a web of circumstances woven to immesh him, which the condition of society that the author intends to repudiate, renders impossible ; and which, if true, would prove not that the framework of law is tyrannous, but that the will of a single oppressor may elude it. The subject of " St. Leon " is more congenial to the author's power ; but it is, in like manner, a logical development of the consequences of a being prolonged on earth through ages ; and, as the dismal vista expands, the skeleton speculators crowd in to mock and sadden us !

Mr. Godwin was thus a man of two beings,

which held little discourse with each other—the daring inventor of theories constructed of air-drawn diagrams—and the simple gentleman, who suffered nothing to disturb or excite him, beyond his study. He loved to walk in the crowded streets of London, not like Lamb, enjoying the infinite varieties of many-coloured life around him, but because he felt, amidst the noise, and crowd, and glare, more intensely the imperturbable stillness of his own contemplations. His means of comfortable support were mainly supplied by a shop in Skinner Street, where, under the auspices of “M. J. Godwin & Co.,” the prettiest and wisest books for children issued, which old-fashioned parents presented to their children, without suspecting that the graceful lessons of piety and goodness which charmed away the selfishness of infancy, were published, and sometimes revised, and now and then written, by a philosopher whom they would scarcely venture to name! He met the exigences which the vicissitudes of business sometimes caused, with the trusting simplicity which marked his course—he asked his friends for aid without scruple, considering that their means were justly the due of one who toiled in thought for their

inward life, and had little time to provide for his own outward existence; and took their excuses, when offered, without doubt or offence. The very next day after I had been honoured and delighted by an introduction to him at Lamb's chambers, I was made still more proud and happy by his appearance at my own on such an errand—which my poverty, not my will, rendered abortive. After some pleasant chat on indifferent matters, he carelessly observed, that he had a little bill for 150*l.* falling due on the morrow, which he had forgotten till that morning, and desired the loan of the necessary amount for a few weeks. At first, in eager hope of being able thus to oblige one whom I regarded with admiration akin to awe, I began to consider whether it was possible for me to raise such a sum; but, alas! a moment's reflexion sufficed to convince me that the hope was vain, and I was obliged, with much confusion, to assure my distinguished visitor how glad I should have been to serve him, but that I was only just starting as a special pleader, was obliged to write for magazines to help me on, and had not such a sum in the world. "Oh dear," said the philosopher, "I thought you were a young gentleman of fortune—don't mention it—don't mention

it; I shall do very well elsewhere :”—and then, in the most gracious manner, reverted to our former topics ; and sat in my small room for half an hour, as if to convince me that my want of fortune made no difference in his esteem. A slender tribute to the literature he had loved and served so well, was accorded to him in the old age to which he attained, by the gift of a sinecure in the Exchequer, of about 200*l.* a-year, connected with the custody of the Records ; and the last time I saw him, he was heaving an immense key to unlock the musty treasures of which he was guardian—how unlike those he had unlocked, with finer talisman, for the astonishment and alarm of one generation, and the delight of all others !

JOHN THELWALL, who had once exulted in the appellation of Citizen Thelwall, having been associated with Coleridge and Southey in their days of enthusiastical dreaming, though a more precise and practical reformer than either, was introduced by them to Lamb, and was welcomed to his circle, in the true catholicism of its spirit, although its master cared nothing for the Roman virtue which Thelwall devotedly cherished, and which Horne Tooke kept in uncertain vibration between a rebellion and a hoax.



Lamb justly esteemed Thelwall as a thoroughly honest man ;—not honest merely in reference to the moral relations of life, but to the processes of thought ; one whose mind, acute and vigorous, but narrow, perceived only the object directly before it, and, undisturbed by collateral circumstances, reflected, with literal fidelity, the impression it received, and maintained it as sturdily against the beauty that might soften it, or the wisdom that might mould it, as against the tyranny that would stifle its expression. “ If to be honest as the world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand,” to be honest as the mind works is to be one man of a million ; and such a man was Thelwall. Starting with imperfect education from the thralldom of domestic oppression, with slender knowledge, but with fiery zeal, into the dangers of political enterprise, and treading fearlessly on the verge of sedition, he saw nothing before him but powers which he assumed to be despotism and vice, and rushed headlong to crush them. The point of time—just that when the accumulated force of public opinion had obtained a virtual mastery over the accumulated corruptions of ages, but when power, still unconvinced of its danger, presented its boldest front to

opposing intellect, or strove to crush it in the cruelty of awaking fear—gave scope for the ardent temperament of an orator almost as poor in scholastic cultivation as in external fortune ; but strong in integrity, and rich in burning words.

Thus passionate, Thelwall spoke boldly and vehemently—at a time when indignation was thought to be virtue ; but there is no reason to believe he ever meditated any treason except that accumulated in the architectural sophistry of Lord Eldon, by which he proved a person who desired to awe the Government into a change of policy to be guilty of compassing the king's death—as thus :—that the king must resist the proposed alteration in his measures—that resisting he must be deposed—and that being deposed, he must necessarily die ;—though his boldness of speech placed him in jeopardy even after the acquittals of his simple-minded associate Hardy, and his enigmatical instructor Tooke, who forsook him, and left him, when acquitted, to the mercy of the world. His life, which before this event had been one of self-denial and purity remarkable in a young man who had imbibed the impulses of revolutionary France, partook of considerable vicissitude. At one time,

he was raised by his skill in correcting impediments of speech, and teaching elocution as a science, into elegant competence—at other times saddened by the difficulties of poorly requited literary toil and wholly unrequited patriotism; but he preserved his integrity and his cheerfulness—"a man of hope and forward-looking mind even to the last." Unlike Godwin, whose profound thoughts slowly struggled into form, and seldom found utterance in conversation,—speech was, in him, all in all, his delight, his profession, his triumph, with little else than passion to inspire or colour it. The flaming orations of his "Tribune," rendered more piquant by the transparent masquerade of ancient history, which, in his youth, "touched monied worldlings with dismay," and infected the poor with dangerous anger, seemed vapid, spiritless, and shallow when addressed through the press to the leisure of the thoughtful. The light which glowed with so formidable a lustre before the evening audience, vanished on closer examination, and proved to be only a harmless phantom-vapour which left no traces of destructive energy behind it.

Thelwall, in person small, compact, muscular—

with a head denoting indomitable resolution, and features deeply furrowed by the ardent workings of the mind,—was as energetic in all his pursuits and enjoyments as in political action. He was earnestly devoted to the Drama, and enjoyed its greatest representations with the freshness of a boy who sees a play for the first time. He hailed the kindred energy of Kean with enthusiastic praise; but abjuring the narrowness of his political vision in matters of taste, did justice to the nobler qualities of Mrs. Siddons and her brothers. In literature and art also, he relaxed the bigotry of his liberal intolerance, and expatiated in their wider fields with a taste more catholic. Here Lamb was ready with his sympathy, which indeed even the political zeal, that he did not share, was too hearted to repel. Although generally detesting lectures on literature as superficial and vapid substitutes for quiet reading, and recitations as unreal mockeries of the true Drama, he sometimes attended the entertainments, composed of both, which Thelwall, in the palmy days of his prosperity, gave at his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, not on politics, which he had then forsaken for elocutionary science, though maintaining the principles of his youth, but

partly on elocution, and partly on poetry and acting, into which he infused the fiery enthusiasm of his nature. Sometimes, indeed, his fervour animated his disquisitions on the philosophy of speech with greater warmth than he reserved for more attractive themes; the melted vowels were blended into a rainbow, or dispersed like fleecy clouds; and the theory of language was made interesting by the honesty and vigour of the speaker. Like all men who have been chiefly self-taught, he sometimes presented common-places as original discoveries, with an air which strangers mistook for quackery; but they were unjust; to the speaker these were the product of his own meditation, though familiar to many, and not rarely possessed the charm of originality in their freshness. Lamb at least, felt that it was good, among other companions of far richer and more comprehensive intelligence, to have one friend who was undisturbed by misgiving either for himself or his cause; who enunciated wild paradox and worn-out common-place with equal confidence; and who was ready to sacrifice ease, fortune, fame—everything but speech, and, if it had been possible, even *that*—to the cause of truth or friendship.

WILLIAM HAZLITT was, for many years, one of the brightest and most constant ornaments of Lamb's parties;—linked to him in the firm bond of intellectual friendship—which remained unshaken in spite of some superficial differences, “short and far between,” arising from Lamb's insensibility to Hazlitt's political animosities and his adherence to Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, who shared them. Hazlitt in his boyhood had derived from his father that attachment to abstract truth for its own sake, and that inflexible determination to cherish it, which naturally predominated in the being of the minister of a small rural congregation, who cherished religious opinions adverse to those of the great body of his countrymen, and waged a spiritual warfare throughout his peaceful course. Thus disciplined, he was introduced to the friendship of youthful poets, in whom the dawn of the French Revolution had enkindled hope, and passion, and opinions tinctured with hope and passion, which he eagerly embraced; and when changes passed over the prospects of mankind, which induced them, in maturer years, to modify the doctrines they had taught, he resented these defections almost as personal wrongs, and, when

his pen found scope, and his tongue utterance, wrote and spoke of them with such bitterness as can only spring from the depths of old affection. No writer, however, except Wilson, did such noble justice to the poetry of Wordsworth, when most despised, and to the genius of Coleridge, when most obscured; he cherished a true admiration for each in "the last recesses of the mind," and defended them with dogged resolution against the scorns and slights of the world. Still the superficial difference was, or seemed, too wide to admit of personal intercourse; and I do not think that during the many years which elapsed between my introduction to Lamb and Hazlitt's death, he ever met either of the poets at the rooms of the man they united in loving.

Although Mr. Hazlitt was thus staunch in his attachment to principles which he revered as true, he was by no means rigid in his mode of maintaining and illustrating them; but, on the contrary, frequently diminished the immediate effect of his reasonings by the prodigality and richness of the allusions with which he embossed them. He had as unquenchable a desire for truth as others have for wealth, or power, or fame; he pursued it with sturdy singleness of purpose; and

enunciated it without favour or fear. But, besides that love of truth, that sincerity in pursuing it, and that boldness in telling it, he had also a fervent aspiration after the beautiful; a vivid sense of pleasure, and an intense consciousness of his own individual being, which sometimes produced obstacles to the current of speculation, by which it was broken into dazzling eddies or urged into devious windings. Acute, fervid, vigorous, as his mind was, it wanted the one great central power of Imagination, which brings all the other faculties into harmonious action; multiplies them into each other; makes truth visible in the forms of beauty, and substitutes intellectual vision for proof. Thus, in him, truth and beauty held divided empire. In him, the spirit was willing, but the flesh was *strong*; and, when these contend, it is not difficult to anticipate the result; "for the power of beauty shall sooner transform honesty from what it is into a bawd, than the person of honesty shall transform beauty into its likeness." This "sometime paradox" was vividly exemplified in Hazlitt's personal history, his conversation, and his writings. To the solitudes of the country in which he mused on "fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," a

temperament of unusual ardour had given an intense interest, akin to that with which Rousseau has animated and oppressed the details of his early years.

He had not then, nor did he find till long afterwards, power to embody his meditations and feelings in words. The consciousness of thoughts which he could not hope adequately to express, increased his natural reserve, and he turned for relief to the art of painting, in which he might silently realise his dreams of beauty, and repay the loveliness of nature by fixing some of its fleeting aspects in immortal tints. A few old prints from the old masters awakened the spirit of emulation within him; the sense of beauty became identified in his mind with that of glory and duration; while the peaceful labour he enjoyed calmed the tumult in his veins, and gave steadiness to his pure and distant aim. He pursued the art with an earnestness and patience which he vividly describes in his essay, "On the Pleasure of Painting;" and to which he frequently reverted in the happiest moods of his conversation; and, although in this, his chosen pursuit, he failed, the passionate desire for success, and the long struggle to attain it, left deep traces

in his mind, heightening his keen perception of external things, and mingling with all his speculations airy shapes and hues which he had vainly striven to transfer to canvas. A painter may acquire a fine insight into the nice distinctions of character,—he may copy manners in words as he does in colours,—but it may be apprehended that his course as a severe reasoner will be somewhat “troubled with thick coming fancies.” And if the successful pursuit of art may thus disturb the process of abstract contemplation, how much more may an unsatisfied ambition ruffle it; bid the dark threads of thought glitter with radiant fancies unrealised, and clothe the diagrams of speculation with the fragments of picture which the mind cherishes the more fondly, because the hand refused to realise? What wonder, if, in the mind of an ardent youth, thus struggling in vain to give palpable existence to the shapes of loveliness which haunted him, “the homely beauty of the good old cause” should assume the fascinations not properly its own?

This association of beauty with reason diminished the immediate effect of Mr. Hazlitt’s political essays, while it enhanced their permanent value. —It was the fashion, in his life-time, to

denounce him as a sour Jacobin ; but no description could be more unjust. Under the influence of some bitter feeling, or some wayward fancy, he occasionally poured out a furious invective against those whom he regarded as the enemies of liberty, or as apostates from her cause ; but, in general, the force of his expostulation, or his reasoning, was diverted (unconsciously to himself) by figures and phantasies, by fine and quaint allusions, by quotations from his favourite authors, introduced with singular felicity, as respects the direct link of association, but tending, by their very beauty, to unnerve the mind of the reader, and substitute the sense of luxury for clear conviction, or noble anger. In some of his essays, where the reasoning is most cogent, every other sentence contains some exquisite passage from Shakspeare, or Fletcher, or Wordsworth, trailing after it a line of golden associations ; or some reference to a novel, over which we have a thousand times forgotten the wrongs of mankind ; till, in the recurring shocks of pleasurable surprise, the main argument is forgotten. When, for example, he compares the position of certain political waverers to that of *Clarissa Harlowe* confronting the ravisher who

would repeat his outrage, with the penknife pointed to her breast, and her eyes uplifted to Heaven, and describes them as having been, like her, trepanned into a house of ill-fame, near Pall Mall, and there defending their soiled virtue with their pen-knives ; what reader, at the suggestion of the stupendous scene which the allusion directly revives, can think or care about the renegade of yesterday ? Here, again, is felt the want of that Imagination which brings all things into one, tinges all our thoughts and sympathies with one hue, and rejects every ornament which does not heighten or prolong the feeling which it seeks to embody.

Even when he retaliates on Southey for attacking his old co-patriots, the poetical associations which bitter remembrance suggests, almost neutralise the vituperation ; he brings every "flower which sad embroidery wears to strew the laureate hearse," where ancient regards are interred ; and merges all the censure of the changed politician in praise of the simple dignity, and the generous labours of a singularly noble and unsullied life. So little does he regard the unity of sentiment in his compositions, that in his "Letter to Gifford," after a series of just and bitter retorts on his

maligner as "the fine link which connects literature with the police," he takes a fancy to teach that "ultra-crepidarian critic" his own theory of the natural disinterestedness of the human mind, and develops it, not in the dry, hard, mathematical style in which it was first enunciated, but "o'er informed" with the glow of sentiment, and terminating in an eloquent rhapsody. This latter portion of the letter is one of the noblest of his effusions, but it entirely destroys the first in the mind of the reader; for who, when thus contemplating the living wheels on which human benevolence is borne onwards in its triumphant career, and the spirit with which they are instinct, can think of the literary wasp which had settled for a moment upon them, and who had just before been mercilessly transfixing with minikin arrows?

But the most signal example of the influences which "the shows of things" exercised over Mr. Hazlitt's mind was his setting up the Emperor Napoleon as his idol. He strove to justify this predilection to himself by referring it to the revolutionary origin of his hero, and the contempt with which he trampled upon the claims of legitimacy, and humbled the pride of kings. But if his

"only love" thus sprung "from his only hate," it was not cherished in its blossom by antipathies. If there had been nothing in his mind which tended to aggrandisement and glory, and which would fain reconcile the principles of freedom with the lavish accumulation of power, he might have desired the triumph of young tyranny over legitimate thrones; but he would scarcely have watched its progress and its fall "like a lover and a child." His feeling for Bonaparte in exile was not a sentiment of respect for fallen greatness; not a desire to trace "the soul of goodness in things evil;" not a loathing of the treatment the Emperor received from "his cousin kings" in the day of adversity; but entire affection mingling with the current of the blood, and pervading the moral and intellectual being. Nothing less than this strong attachment, at once personal and refined, would have enabled him to encounter the toil of collecting and arranging facts and dates for four volumes of narrative, which constitute his "Life of Napoleon;"—a drudgery too abhorrent to his habits of mind as a thinker, to be sustained by any stimulus which the prospect of remuneration or the hope of applause could supply.

It is not so much in the ingenious excuses which he discovers for the worst acts of his hero—offered even for the midnight execution of the Duke d'Enghien and the invasion of Spain—that the stamp of personal devotion is obvious, as in the graphic force with which he has delineated the short-lived splendours of the Imperial Court, and “the trivial fond records” he has gathered of every vestige of human feeling by which he could reconcile the Imperial Cynic to the species he scorned. The first two volumes of his work, although redeemed by scattered thoughts of true originality and depth, are often confused and spiritless; the characters of the principal revolutionists are drawn too much in the style of awkward, sprawling caricatures; but when the hero casts all his rivals into the distance, erects himself the individual enemy of England, consecrates his power by religious ceremonies, and defines it by the circle of a crown, the author's strength becomes concentrated; his narrative assumes an epic dignity and fervour; dallies with the flowers of usurped prerogative, and glows with “the long-resounding march and energy divine.” How happy and proud is he to picture the meeting of the Emperor with the Pope, and the grandeurs of

the coronation! How he grows wanton in celebrating the fêtes of the Tuileries, as “presenting all the elegance of enchanted pageants,” and laments them as “gone like a fairy revel!” How he “lives along the line” of Austerlitz, and rejoices in its thunder, and hails its setting sun, and exults in the minutest details of the subsequent meeting of the conquered sovereigns at the feet of the conqueror! How he expatiates on the fatal marriage with “the deadly Austrian,” (as Mr. Cobbett justly called Maria Louisa), as though it were a chapter in romance, and sheds the grace of beauty on the imperial picture! How he kindles with martial ardour as he describes the preparations against Russia; musters the myriads of barbarians with a show of dramatic justice; and fondly lingers among the brief triumphs of Moskwa on the verge of the terrible catastrophe! The narrative of that disastrous expedition is, indeed, written with a master’s hand; we see the “grand army” marching to its destruction through the immense perspective; the wilde hordes flying before the terror of its “coming;” the barbaric magnificence of Moscow towering in the remote distance; and when we gaze upon the sacrificial

conflagration of the Kremlin, we feel that it is worthy to become the funeral pile of the conqueror's glories. It is well for the readers of this splendid work, that there is more in it of the painter than of the metaphysician; that its style glows with the fervour of battle, or stiffens with the spoils of victory; yet we wonder that this monument to imperial grandeur should be raised from the dead level of jacobinism by an honest and profound thinker. The solution is, that although he was this, he was also more—that, in opinion, he was devoted to the cause of the people; but that, in feeling, he required some individual object of worship; that he selected Napoleon as one in whose origin and career he might at once impersonate his principles and gratify his affections; and that he adhered to his own idea with heroic obstinacy, when the “child and champion of the Republic” openly sought to repress all feeling and thought, but such as he could cast in his own iron moulds, and scoffed at popular enthusiasm even while it bore him to the accomplishment of his loftiest desires.

Mr. Hazlitt had little inclination to talk or write about contemporary authors, and still less to read

them. He was with difficulty persuaded to look into the Scotch novels, but when he did so, he found them old in substance though new in form, read them with as much avidity as the rest of the world, and expressed better than any one else what all the world felt about them. His hearty love of them, however, did not diminish, but aggravate his dislike of the political opinions so zealously and consistently maintained, of their great author; and yet the strength of his hatred towards that which was accidental and transitory only set off the unabated power of his regard for the great and the lasting. Coleridge and Wordsworth were not moderns to him, for they were the inspirers of his youth, which was his own antiquity, and the feelings which were the germ of their poetry had sunk deep into his heart. With the exception of the works of these, and of his friends Barry Cornwall and Sheridan Knowles, in whose successes he rejoiced, he held modern literature in slight esteem, and regarded the discoveries of science and the visions of optimism with an undazzled eye. His "large discourse of reason" looked not before, but after. He felt it a sacred duty, as a lover of genius and art, to defend the

fame of the mighty dead. When the old painters were assailed in "The Catalogue Raisonné of the British Institution," he was "touched with noble anger." All his own vain longings after the immortality of the works which were libelled,—all the tranquillity and beauty they had shed into his soul,—all his comprehension of the sympathy and delight of thousands, which, accumulating through long time, had attested their worth—were fused together to dazzle and to subdue the daring critic who would disturb the judgment of ages. So, when a popular poet assailed the fame of Rousseau, seeking to reverse the decision of posterity on what that great though unhappy writer had achieved by suggesting the opinion of people of condition in his neighbourhood on the figure he made to their apprehensions while in the service of Madame de Warrens, he vindicated the prerogatives of genius with the true logic of passion. Few things irritated him more than the claims set up for the present generation to be wiser and better than those which have gone before it. He had no power of imagination to embrace the golden clouds which hung over the Future, but he rested and expatiated in the Past. To his apprehension

human good did not appear a slender shoot of yesterday, like the bean-stalk in the fairy tale, aspiring to the skies, and leading to an enchanted castle, but a huge growth of intertwisted fibres, grasping the earth by numberless roots of custom, habit, and affection, and bearing vestiges of "a thousand storms, a thousand thunders."

When I first met Hazlitt, in the year 1815, he was staggering under the blow of Waterloo. The re-appearance of his imperial idol on the coast of France, and his triumphant march to Paris, like a fairy vision, had excited his admiration and sympathy to the utmost pitch; and though in many respects sturdily English in feeling, he could scarcely forgive the valour of the conquerors; and bitterly resented the captivity of the Emperor in St. Helena, which followed it, as if he had sustained a personal wrong. On this subject only, he was "eaten up with passion"; on all others, he was the fairest, the most candid of reasoners. His countenance was then handsome, but marked by a painful expression; his black hair, which had curled stifly over his temples had scarcely received its first tints of grey; his gait was awkward; his dress was neglected; and, in the company of

strangers, his bashfulness was almost painful—but, when, in the society of Lamb and one or two others, he talked on his favourite themes of old English books, or old Italian pictures, no one's conversation could be more delightful. The poets, from intercourse with whom he had drawn so much of his taste, and who had contributed to shed the noble infection of beauty through his reasoning faculties, had scarcely the opportunity of appreciating their progress. It was, in after years, by the fire-side of "the Lambs," that his tongue was gradually loosened, and his passionate thoughts found appropriate words. There, his struggles to express the fine conceptions with which his mind was filled, were encouraged by entire sympathy; there he began to stammer out his just and original conceptions of Chaucer and Spenser, and other English poets and prose writers, more talked of, though not better known, by their countrymen; there he was thoroughly understood, and dexterously cheered by Miss Lamb, whose nice discernment of his first efforts in conversation, were dwelt upon by him with affectionate gratitude, even when most out of humour with the world. When he mastered his diffidence, he did not talk for effect, to dazzle, or

surprise, or annoy, but, with the most simple and honest desire to make his view of the subject in hand entirely apprehended by his hearer. There was sometimes an obvious struggle to do this to his own satisfaction; he seemed labouring to drag his thought to light from its deep lurking-place; and, with timid distrust of that power of expression which he had found so late in life, he often betrayed a fear lest he had failed to make himself understood, and recurred to the subject again and again, that he might be assured he had succeeded. With a certain doggedness of manner, he showed nothing pragmatical or exclusive; he never drove a principle to its utmost possible consequences, but, like Locksley, "allowed for the wind." For some years previous to his death, he observed an entire abstinence from fermented liquors, which he had once quaffed with the proper relish he had for all the good things of this life, but which he courageously resigned when he found the indulgence perilous to his health and faculties. The cheerfulness with which he made this sacrifice, was one of the most amiable traits in his character. He had no censure for others, who, in the same dangers, were less wise or less resolute; nor did he think he had earned,

by his own constancy, any right to intrude advice which he knew, if wanted, must be unavailing. Nor did he profess to be a convert to the general system of abstinence, which was advanced by one of his kindest and staunchest friends; he avowed that he yielded to necessity; and, instead of avoiding the sight of that which he could no longer taste, he was seldom so happy as when he sat with friends at their wine, participating the sociality of the time; and renewing his own past enjoyment in that of his companions, without regret and without envy. Like Dr. Johnson, he made himself poor amends for the loss of wine by drinking tea, not so largely, indeed, as the hero of Boswell, but at least of equal potency; for he might have challenged Mrs. Thrale, and all her sex, to make stronger tea than his own. In society, as in politics, he was no flincher. He loved "to hear the chimes at midnight," without considering them as a summons to rise. At these seasons, when in his happiest mood, he used to dwell on the conversational powers of his friends, and live over again the delightful hours he had passed with them; repeat the pregnant puns that one had made; tell over again a story with which another had convulsed

the room ; or expatiate on the eloquence of a third ; always best pleased when he could detect some talent which was unregarded by the world, and giving alike, to the celebrated and the unknown, due Honour.

Mr. Hazlitt delivered three courses of lectures at the Surrey Institution, on *The English Poets* ; on *The English Comic Writers* ; and on *The Age of Elizabeth* ; which Lamb (under protest against lectures in general) regularly attended, an earnest admirer, amidst crowds with whom the lecturer had "an imperfect sympathy." They consisted chiefly of Dissenters, who agreed with him in his hatred of Lord Castlereagh, and his love of religious freedom, but who "loved no plays ;" of Quakers, who approved him as the earnest opponent of slavery and capital punishment, but who "heard no music ;" of citizens, devoted to the main chance, who had a hankering after "the improvement of the mind ;" but to whom his favourite doctrine of its natural disinterestedness was a riddle ; of a few enemies who came to sneer ; and a few friends, who were eager to learn, and to admire. The comparative insensibility of the bulk of his audience to his finest passages, some-

times provoked him to awaken their attention by points which broke the train of his discourse; after which, he could make himself amends by some abrupt paradox which might set their prejudices on edge, and make them fancy they were shocked. He startled many of them at the onset, by observing, that, since Jacob's dream, "the heavens have gone farther off, and become astronomical;" a fine extravagance, which the ladies and gentlemen, who had grown astronomical themselves under the preceding lecturer, felt called on to resent as an attack on their severer studies. When he read a well-known extract from Cowper, comparing a poor cottager with Voltaire, and had pronounced the line: "A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew," they broke into a joyous shout of self-gratulation, that they were so much wiser than the scornful Frenchman. When he passed by Mrs. Hannah More with observing that "she had written a great deal which he had never read," a voice gave expression to the general commiseration and surprise, by calling out "More pity for you!" They were confounded at his reading with more emphasis, perhaps, than discretion, Gay's epigrammatic lines on Sir Richard Blackstone,

in which scriptural persons are too freely hitched into rhyme ; but he went doggedly on to the end, and, by his perseverance, baffled those who, if he had acknowledged himself wrong, by stopping, would have visited him with an outburst of displeasure which he felt to be gathering. He once had a more edifying advantage over them. He was enumerating the humanities which endeared Dr. Johnson to his mind, and at the close of an agreeable catalogue, mentioned, as last and noblest, “his carrying the poor victim of disease and dissipation on his back, through Fleet Street,” at which a titter arose from some, who were struck by the picture, as ludicrous, and a murmur from others, who deemed the allusion unfit for ears polite : he paused for an instant, and then added, in his sturdiest and most impressive manner,—“an act which realises the parable of the Good Samaritan ;” at which his moral and his delicate hearers shrunk, rebuked, into deep silence. He was not eloquent, in the true sense of the term ; for his thoughts were too weighty to be moved along by the shallow stream of feeling which an evening’s excitement can rouse. He wrote all his lectures, and read them as they were written ; but his deep

voice and earnest manner suited his matter well. He seemed to dig into his subject, and not in vain. In delivering his longer quotations, he had scarcely continuity enough for the versification of Shakspeare and Milton, "with linked sweetness long drawn out;" but he gave Pope's brilliant satire and delightful compliments, which are usually complete within the couplet, with an elegance and point which the poet himself, could he have heard, would have felt as indicating their highest praise.

Mr. Hazlitt, having suffered, for many years, from derangement of the digestive organs, for which perhaps a moderate use of fermented liquors would have been preferable to abstinence, solaced only by the intense tincture of tea, in which he found refuge, worn out at last, died on 18th Sept. 1830, at the age of fifty-two. Lamb frequently visited him during his sufferings, which were not, as has been erroneously suggested, aggravated by the want of needful comforts; for although his careless habits had left no provision for sickness, his friends gladly acknowledged, by their united aid, the deep intellectual obligations due to the great thinker. In a moment of acute pain, when the needless apprehension for the future rushed upon him, he

dictated a brief and peremptory letter to the Editor of the "Edinburgh Review," requiring a considerable remittance, to which he had no claim but that of former remunerated services, which the friend, who obeyed his bidding, feared might excite displeasure; but he mistook Francis Jeffrey; the sum demanded was received by return of post, with the most anxious wishes for Hazlitt's recovery—just too late for him to understand his error. Lamb joined a few friends in attending his funeral in the church-yard of St. Anne's Soho, where he was interred, and felt his loss—not so violently at the time, as mournfully in the frequent recurrence of the sense that a chief source of intellectual pleasure was stopped. His personal frailties are nothing to us now; his thoughts survive; in them we have his better part entire, and in them must be traced his true history. The real events of his life are not to be traced in its external changes; as his engagement by the Morning Chronicle, or his transfer of his services to the Times, or his introduction to the "Edinburgh Review;" but in the progress and development of his fine understanding as nurtured and checked and swayed by his affections. His warfare was within; its spoils are ours!

One of the soundest and most elegant scholars whom the school of Christ's Hospital ever produced, Mr. THOMAS BARNES, was a frequent guest at Lamb's chambers in the Temple; and though the responsibilities he undertook, before Lamb quitted that, his happiest abode, prevented him from visiting often at Great Russell Street, at Islington, or Enfield, he was always ready to assist by the kind word of the powerful journal in which he became most potent, the expanding reputation of his school-mate and friend. After establishing a high social and intellectual character at Cambridge, he had entered the legal profession as a special pleader, but was prevented from applying the needful devotion to that laborious pursuit by violent rheumatic affections, which he solaced by writing critiques and essays of rare merit. So shattered did he appear in health, that when his friends learned that he had accepted the editorship of the Times newspaper, they almost shuddered at the attempt as suicidal, and anticipated a speedy ruin to his constitution from the pressure of constant labour and anxiety, on the least healthful hours of toil. But he had judged better than they of his own physical and intellectual resources, and

the mode in which the grave responsibility and constant exertion of his office would affect both; for the regular effort consolidated his feverish strength, gave evenness and tranquillity to a life of serious exertion, and supplied, for many years, power equal to the perpetual demand; affording a striking example how, when finely attuned, the mind can influence the body to its uses. The facile adaptation of his intellect to his new duties, was scarcely less remarkable than the mastery it achieved over his desultory habits and physical infirmities; for, until then, it had seemed more refined than vigorous—more elegant than weighty—too fastidious to endure the supervision and arrangement of innumerable reports, paragraphs, and essays; but, while a scholarly grace was shed by him through all he wrote or moulded, the needful vigour was never wanting to the high office of superintending the great daily miracle; to the discipline of its various contributors; or to the composition of articles which he was always ready, on the instant of emergency, to supply.

Mr. Barnes, linked by school associations with Leigh Hunt, filled the theatrical department of criticism in the Examiner during the period when

the Editor's imprisonment for alleged libel on the Prince Regent precluded his attendance on the theatres. It was no easy office of friendship to supply the place of Hunt in the department of criticism, he may be almost said to have invented; but Mr. Barnes, though in a different style, well sustained the attractions of the "Theatrical Examiner." Fortunately the appearance of Mr. Kean during this interval enabled him to gratify the profound enthusiasm of his nature, without doing violence to the fastidious taste to which it was usually subjected. He perceived at once the vivid energy of the new actor; understood his faults to be better than the excellencies of ordinary aspirants; and hailed him with the most generous praise—the more valuable as it proceeded from one rarely induced to render applause, and never yielding it except on the conviction of true excellence. Hazlitt, who contributed theatrical criticism, at the same time, to the *Morning Chronicle*, and who astounded the tame mediocrity of Mr. Perry's subordinates by his earnest eulogy, and Barnes, had the satisfaction of first appreciating this unfriended performer, and, while many were offended by the daring novelty of his style,

and more stood aloof with fashionable indifference from a deserted theatre, of awakening that spirit which retrieved the fortunes of Old Drury—which revived, for a brilliant interval, the interest of the English stage—and which bore the actor on a tide of intoxicating success that “knew no retiring ebb” till it was unhappily checked by his own lamentable frailties.\*

\* As the Essays of Mr. Barnes have never been collected, I take leave to present to the reader the conclusion of his article in the Examiner of February 27, 1814, on the first appearance of Mr. Kean in Richard :—

“In the heroic parts, he animated every spectator with his own feelings ; when he exclaimed ‘that a thousand hearts were swelling in his bosom,’ the house shouted to express their accordance to a truth so nobly exemplified by the energy of his voice, by the grandeur of his mien. His death-scene was the grandest conception, and executed in the most impressive manner ; it was a piece of noble poetry, expressed by action instead of language. He fights desperately : he is disarmed and exhausted of all bodily strength : he disdains to fall, and his strong volition keeps him standing : he fixes that head, full of intellectual and heroic power, directly on the enemy : he bears up his chest with an expansion which seems swelling with more than human spirit : he holds his uplifted arm in calm but dreadful defiance of his conqueror. But he is but man, and he falls after this sublime effort senseless to the ground. We have felt our eyes gush on reading a passage of exquisite poetry. We have been ready to leap at sight of a noble picture, but we never felt stronger emotion, more overpowering sensations, than were kindled by the novel sublimity of this catastrophe. In matters of mere taste, there will be a difference

The manners of Mr. Barnes, though extremely courteous, were so reserved as to seem cold to strangers; but they were changed, as by magic, by the contemplation of moral or intellectual beauty, awakened in a small circle. I well remember him, late one evening, in the year 1816, when only two or three friends remained with Lamb and his sister, long after "we had heard the chimes at midnight," holding inveterate but delighted controversy with Lamb, respecting the tragic power of Dante as compared with that of Shakspeare. Dante was scarcely known to Lamb; for he was unable to read the original, and Cary's noble translation was not then known to him; and Barnes aspired to the glory of affording him a glimpse of a kindred greatness in the mighty Italian with that which he had conceived incapable of human rivalry. The face of the advocate of Dante, heavy when in repose, grew bright with earnest admiration as he quoted images,

of opinion; but here there was no room to doubt, no reason could be imprudent enough to hesitate. Every heart beat an echo responsive to this call of elevated nature, and yearned with fondness towards the man who, while he excited admiration for himself, made also his admirers glow with a warmth of conscious superiority, because they were able to appreciate such an exalted degree of excellence."

sentiments, dialogues, against Lamb, who had taken his own immortal stand on Lear, and urged the supremacy of the child-changed father against all the possible Ugolinos of the world. Some reference having been made by Lamb to his own exposition of Lear, which had been recently published in a magazine, edited by Leigh Hunt, under the title of "The Reflector," touched another and a tenderer string of feeling, turned a little the course of his enthusiasm the more to inflame it, and brought out a burst of affectionate admiration for his friend, then scarcely known to the world, which was the more striking for its contrast with his usually sedate demeanour. I think I see him now, leaning forward upon the little table on which the candles were just expiring in their sockets, his fists clenched, his eyes flashing, and his face bathed in perspiration, exclaiming to Lamb, "And do I not know, my boy, that you have written about Shakspeare, and Shakspeare's own Lear, finer than any one ever did in the world, and won't I let the world know it?" He was right; there is no criticism in the world more worthy of the genius it estimates than that little passage referred to on Lear; few felt it then like Barnes;

thousands have read it since, here, and tens of thousands in America; and have felt as he did; and will answer for the truth of that excited hour.

Mr. Barnes combined singular acuteness of understanding with remarkable simplicity of character. If he was skilful in finding out those who duped others, he made some amends to the world of sharpers by being abundantly duped himself. He might caution the public to be on their guard against impostors of every kind, but his heart was open to every species of delusion which came in the shape of misery. Poles—real and theatrical—refugees, pretenders of all kinds, found their way to the 'Times' inner office, and though the inexorable editor excluded their lucubrations from the precious space of its columns, he rarely omitted to make them amends by large contributions from his purse. The intimate acquaintance with all the varieties of life forced on him by his position in the midst of a moving epitome of the world, which vividly reflected them all, failed to teach him distrust or discretion. He was a child in the centre of the most feverish agitations; a dupe in the midst of the quickest apprehensions; and while, with unbending pride, he

repelled the slightest interference with his high functions from the greatest quarters, he was open to every tale from the lowest which could win from him personal aid. Rarely as he was seen in his later years in Lamb's circle, he is indestructibly associated with it in the recollection of the few survivors of its elder days; and they will lament with me that the influences for good which he shed largely on all the departments of busy life, should have necessarily left behind them such slender memorials of one of the kindest, the wisest, and the best of men who have ever enjoyed signal opportunities of moulding public opinion, and who have turned them to the noblest and the purest uses.

Among Lamb's early acquaintances and constant admirers was an artist whose chequered career and melancholy death give an interest to the recollections with which he is linked independent of that which belongs to his pictures—  
BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON. The ruling misfortune of his life was somewhat akin to that disproportion in Hazlitt's mind to which I have adverted, but productive in his case of more disastrous results—the possession of two different faculties not harmonised into one, and struggling for mastery—in that

disarrangement of the faculties in which the unproductive talent becomes not a mere negative, but neutralises the other, and even turns its good into evil. Haydon, the son of a respectable tradesman at Plymouth, was endowed with two capacities, either of which, exclusively cultivated with the energy of his disposition, might have led to fortune—the genius of a painter, and the passionate logic of a controversialist; talents scarcely capable of being blended in harmonious action except under the auspices of prosperity such as should satisfy the artist by fame, and appease the literary combatant by triumph.

The combination of a turbulent vivacity of mind with a fine aptitude for the most serene of arts was rendered more infelicitous by the circumstances of the young painter's early career. He was destined painfully to work his way at once through the lower elements of his art and the difficulties of adverse fortune; and though by indomitable courage and unwearied industry he became master of anatomic science, of colouring, and of perspective, and achieved a position in which his efforts might be fairly presented to the notice of the world, his impetuous temperament was

yet further ruffled by the arduous and complicated struggle. With boundless intellectual ambition, he sought to excel in the loftiest department of his art ; and undertook the double responsibility of painting great pictures and of creating the taste which should appreciate, and enforcing the patronage which should reward them.

The patronage of high art, not then adopted by the government, and far beyond the means of individuals of the middle class, necessarily appertained to a few members of the aristocracy, who alone could encourage and remunerate the painters of history. Although the beginning of Mr. Haydon's career was not uncheered by aristocratic favor, the contrast between the greatness of his own conceptions and the humility of the course which prudence suggested as necessary to obtain for himself the means of developing them on canvas, fevered his nature, which, ardent in gratitude for the appreciation and assistance of the wealthy to a degree which might even be mistaken for servility, was also impatient of the general indifference to the cause of which he sought to be, not only the ornament, but unhappily for him, also the champion. Alas ! he there "perceived a divided duty."

Had he been contented silently to paint — to endure obscurity and privation for a while, gradually to mature his powers of execution and soften the rigour of his style and of his virtue, he might have achieved works, not only as vast in outline and as beautiful in portions as those which he exhibited, but so harmonious in their excellencies as to charm away opposition, and ensure speedy reputation, moderate fortune, and lasting fame. But resolved to battle for that which he believed to be “the right,” he rushed into a life-long contest with the Royal Academy; frequently suspended the gentle labours of the pencil for the vehement use of the pen; and thus gave to his course an air of defiance which prevented the calm appreciation of his nobler works, and increased the mischief by reaction. Indignant of the scorns “that patient merit of the unworthy takes,” he sometimes fancied scorns which *impatient* merit in return imputes to the worthy; and thus instead of enjoying the most tranquil of lives (which a painter’s should be), led one of the most animated, restless, and broken. The necessary consequence of this disproportion was a series of pecuniary embarrassments, the direct result of his struggle with fortune;

a succession of feverish triumphs and dissappointments, the fruits of his contest with power; and worse perhaps than either, the frequent diversion of his own genius from its natural course, and the hurried and imperfect development of its most majestic conceptions. To paint as finely as he sometimes did in the ruffled pauses of his passionate controversy, and amidst the terrors of impending want, was to display large innate resources of skill and high energy of mind; but how much more unquestionable fame might he have attained if his disposition had permitted him to be content with charming the world of art, instead of attempting also to instruct or reform it!

Mr. Haydon's course, though thus troubled, was one of constant animation, and illustrated by hours of triumph, the more radiant because they were snatched from adverse fortune and a reluctant people. The exhibition of a single picture by an artist at war with the Academy which exhibited a thousand pictures at the same price—creating a sensation not only among artists and patrons of art, but among the most secluded literary circles—and engaging the highest powers of criticism—was, itself, a splendid occurrence in life;—and,

twice at least, in the instance of the Entry into Jerusalem, and the Lazarus, was crowned with signal success. It was a proud moment for the daring painter, when, at the opening of the first of these Exhibitions, while the crowd of visitors, distinguished in rank or talent, stood doubting whether in the countenance of the chief figure the daring attempt to present an aspect differing from that which had enkindled the devotion of ages—to mingle the human with the Divine, resolution with sweetness, dignified composure with the anticipation of mighty suffering—had not failed, Mrs. Siddons walked slowly up to the centre of the room, surveyed it in silence for a minute or two, and then ejaculated, in her deep, low, thrilling voice, "It is perfect!" quelled all opposition, and removed the doubt, from his own mind at least, for ever.

Although the great body of artists to whose corporate power Mr. Haydon was so passionately opposed, naturally stood aside from his path, it was cheered by the attention and often by the applause of the chief literary spirits of the age, who were attracted by a fierce intellectual struggle. Sir Walter Scott, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Godwin, Shelley, Hunt, Coleridge, Lamb, Keats—and

many young writers for periodical works, in the freshness of unhacknied authorship—took an interest in a course so gallant though so troublous, which excited their sympathy yet did not force them to the irksome duty of unqualified praise. Almost in the outset of his career, Wordsworth addressed to him a sonnet, in heroic strain, associating the artist's calling with his own; making common cause with him, "while the whole world seems adverse to desert;" admonishing him "still to be strenuous for the bright reward, and in the soul admit of no decay;" and, long after, when the poet had, by a wiser perseverance, gradually created the taste which appreciated his works, he celebrated, in another sonnet, the fine autumnal conception in the picture of Napoleon on the rock of St. Helena, with his back to the spectator, contemplating the blank sea, left desolate by the sunken sun. The Conqueror of Napoleon also recognised the artist's claims, and supplied him with another great subject, in the contemplation of the solitude of Waterloo by its hero, ten years after the victory.

Mr. Haydon's vividness of mind burst out in his conversation; which, though somewhat broken and

rugged, like his career, had also, like that, a vein of beauty streaking it. Having associated with most of the remarkable persons of his time, and seen strange varieties of "many-coloured life"—gifted with a rapid perception of character and a painter's eye for effect,—he was able to hit off, with startling facility, sketches in words which lived before the hearer. His anxieties and sorrows did not destroy the buoyancy of his spirits or rob the convivial moment of its prosperity; so that he struggled, and toiled, and laughed, and triumphed, and failed, and hoped on, till the waning of life approached and found him still in opposition to the world, and far from the threshold of fortune. The object of his literary exertions was partially attained; the national attention had been directed to high art; but he did not personally share in the benefits he had greatly contributed to win. Even his cartoon of the Curse in Paradise failed to obtain a prize when he entered the arena with unfledged youths for competitors; and the desertion of the exhibition of his two pictures of Aristides and Nero, at the Egyptian Hall, by the public, for the neighbouring exposure of the clever manikin, General Tom Thumb, quite vanquished

him. It was indeed a melancholy contrast;—the unending succession of bright crowds thronging the levees of the small abortion, and the dim and dusty room in which the two latest historical pictures of the veteran hung for hours without a visitor. Opposition, abuse, even neglect he could have borne, but the sense of ridicule involved in such a juxtaposition drove him to despair. No one who knew him ever apprehended from his disasters such a catastrophe as that which closed them. He had always cherished a belief in the religion of our Church, and avowed it among scoffing unbelievers; and that belief he asserted even in the wild fragments he penned in his last terrible hour. His friends thought that even the sense of the injustice of the world would have contributed with his undimmed consciousness of his own powers to enable him to endure. In his domestic relations also he was happy, blessed in the affection of a wife of great beauty and equal discretion, who, by gentler temper and serener wisdom than his own, had assisted and soothed him in all his anxieties and griefs, and whose image was so identified in his mind with the beautiful as to impress its character on all the forms of female

loveliness he has created. Those who knew him best feel the strongest assurance, that notwithstanding the appearances of preparation which attended his extraordinary suicide, his mind was shattered to pieces—all distorted and broken,—with only one feeling left entire, the perversion of which led to the deed, a hope to awaken sympathy in death for those whom living he could not shelter. The last hurried lines he wrote, entitled “Haydon’s last Thoughts,” consisted of a fevered comparison between the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon, in which he seemed to wish to repair some supposed injustice which in speech or writing he had done to the Conqueror. It was enclosed in a letter addressed to three friends, written in the hour of his death, and containing sad fragmental memorials of those passionate hopes, fierce struggles, and bitter disappointments which brought him through distraction to the grave!

A visit of COLERIDGE was always regarded by Lamb, as an opportunity to afford a rare gratification to a few friends, who, he knew, would prize it; and I well remember the flush of prideful pleasure which came over his face as he would hurry, on his way to the India House, into the office in which I

was a pupil, and stammer out the welcome invitation for the evening. This was true self-sacrifice; for Lamb would have infinitely preferred having his inspired friend to himself and his sister, for a brief renewal of the old Salutation delights; but, I believe, he never permitted himself to enjoy this exclusive treat. The pleasure he conferred was great; for of all celebrated persons I ever saw, Coleridge alone surpassed the expectation created by his writings; for he not only was, but appeared to be, greater than the noblest things he had written.

Lamb used to speak, sometimes with a moistened eye and quivering lip, of Coleridge when young, and wish that we could have seen him in the spring-time of his genius, at a supper in the little sanded parlour of the old Salutation hostel. The promise of those days was never realised, by the execution of any of the mighty works he planned; but the very failure gave a sort of mournful interest to the "large discourse, looking before and after," to which we were enchanted listeners; to the wisdom which lives only in our memories, and must perish with them.

From Coleridge's early works, some notion may be gleaned of what he *was*; when the steep ascent of

fame rose directly before him, while he might loiter to dally with the expectation of its summit, without ignobly shrinking from its labours. His endowments at that time—the close of the last century—when literature had faded into a fashion of poor language, must have seemed, to a mind and heart like Lamb's, no less than miraculous.

A rich store of classical knowledge—a sense of the beautiful, almost verging on the effeminate—a facile power of melody, varying from the solemn stops of the organ to a bird-like flutter of airy sound—the glorious faculty of poetic hope, exerted on human prospects, and presenting its results with the vividness of prophecy; a power of imaginative reasoning which peopled the nearer ground of contemplation with thoughts

“All plumed like estriches, like eagles bathed,  
As full of spirit as the month of May,  
And gorgeous as the sun at Midsummer,”

endowed the author of “The Ancient Mariner,” and “Christabel.” Thus gifted, he glided from youth into manhood, as a fairy voyager on a summer sea, to eddy round and round in dazzling circles, and to make little progress, at last, towards any of those thousand mountain summits

which, glorified by aerial tints, rose before him at the extreme verge of the vast horizon of his genius. "The Ancient Mariner," printed with the "Lyrical Ballads," one of his earliest works, is still his finest poem—at once the most vigorous in design and the most chaste in execution—developing the intensest human affection, amidst the wildest scenery of a poet's dream. Nothing was too bright to hope from such a dawn. The mind of Coleridge seemed the harbinger of the golden years his enthusiasm predicted and painted;—of those days of peace on earth and good will among men, which the best and greatest minds have rejoiced to anticipate—and the earnest belief in which is better than all frivolous enjoyments, all worldly wisdom, all worldly success. And if the noontide of his genius did not fulfil his youth's promise of manly vigour, nor the setting of his earthly life honour it by an answering serenity of greatness—they still have left us abundant reason to be grateful that the glorious fragments of his mighty and imperfect being were ours. Cloud after cloud of German metaphysics rolled before his imagination—which it had power to irradiate with fantastic beauty, and to break into

a thousand shifting forms of grandeur, though not to conquer; mist after mist ascended from those streams where earth and sky should have blended in one imagery, and were turned by its obscured glory to radiant haze; indulgence in the fearful luxury of that talismanic drug, which opens glittering scenes of fantastic beauty on the waking soul to leave it in arid desolation, too often veiled it in partial eclipse, and blended fitful light with melancholy blackness over its vast domain; but the great central light remained unquenched, and cast its gleams through every department of human knowledge. A boundless capacity to receive and retain intellectual treasure made him the possessor of vaster stores of lore, classical, antiquarian, historical, biblical, and miscellaneous, than were ever vouchsafed, at least in our time, to a mortal being; goodly structures of divine philosophy rose before him like exhalations on the fable-land of that his prodigious knowledge; but, alas! there was a deficiency of the power of voluntary action which would have left him unable to embody the shapes of a shepherd's dreams, and made him feeble as an infant before the overpowering majesty of his own! Hence his literary life became one

splendid and sad prospectus—resembling only the portal of a mighty temple which it was forbidden us to enter—but whence strains of rich music issuing “took the prisoned soul and lapped it in Elysium,” and fragments of oracular wisdom startled the thought they could not satisfy.

Hence the riches of his mind were developed, not in writing, but in his speech—conversation I can scarcely call it—which no one who once heard can ever forget. Unable to work in solitude, he sought the gentle stimulus of social admiration, and under its influence poured forth, without stint, the marvellous resources of a mind rich in the spoils of time—richer—richer far in its own glorious imagination and delicate fancy !” There was a noble prodigality in these outpourings; a generous disdain of self; an earnest desire to scatter abroad the seeds of wisdom and beauty, to take root wherever they might fall, and spring up without bearing his name or impress, which might remind the listener of the first days of poetry before it became individualised by the press, when the Homeric rhapsodist wandered through new-born cities and scattered hovels, flashing upon the minds of the wondering audience the bright

train of heroic shapes, the series of godlike exploits, and sought no record more enduring than the fleshly tablets of his hearers' hearts; no memory but that of genial tradition; when copy-right did not ascertain the reciter's property, nor marble at once perpetuate and shed chillness on his fame—

“His bounty was as boundless as the sea,  
His love as deep.”

Like the ocean, in all its variety of gentle moods, his discourse perpetually ebbed and flowed, —nothing in it angular, nothing of set purpose, but now trembling as the voice of divine philosophy, “not harsh nor crabbed, as dull fools suppose, but musical as is Apollo's lute,” was wafted over the summer wave; now glistening in long line of light over some obscure subject, like the path of moonlight on the black water; and, if ever receding from the shore, driven by some sudden gust of inspiration, disclosing the treasures of the deep, like the rich strond in Spenser, “far sunken in their sunless treasures,” to be covered anon by the foam of the same immortal tide. The benignity of his manner befitted the beauty of his disquisitions; his voice, rose from the gentlest pitch of conversation to the height of impassioned eloquence

without effort, as his language expanded from some common topic of the day to the loftiest abstractions; ascending by a winding track of spiral glory to the highest truths which the naked eye could discern, and suggesting starry regions, beyond, which his own telescopic gaze might possibly decipher. If his entranced hearers often were unable to perceive the bearings of his argument—too mighty for any grasp but his own—and sometimes reaching beyond his own—they understood “a *beauty* in the words, if not the words;” and a wisdom and piety in the illustrations, even when unable to connect them with the idea which he desired to illustrate. If an entire scheme of moral philosophy was never developed by him either in speaking or writing, all the parts were great: vast biblical knowledge, though sometimes eddying in splendid conjecture, was always employed with pious reverence; the morality suggested was at once elevated and genial; the charity hoped all things; and the mighty imaginative reasoner, seemed almost to realise the condition suggested by the great Apostle, “that he understood all mysteries and all knowledge, and spake with the tongues both of men and angels!”

After Coleridge had found his last earthly refuge, under the wise and generous care of Mr. Gilman, at Highgate, he rarely visited Lamb, and my opportunities of observing him ceased. From those who were more favoured, as well as from the fragments I have seen of his last effusions, I know that, amidst suffering and weakness, his mighty mind concentrated its energies on the highest subjects which had ever kindled them; that the speculations, which sometimes seemed like paradox, because their extent was too vast to be comprehended in a single grasp of intellectual vision, were informed by a serener wisdom; that his perceptions of the central truth became more undivided, and his piety more profound and humble. His love for Charles and Mary Lamb continued, to the last, one of the strongest of his human affections—of which, by the kindness of a friend,\* I possess an affecting memorial under his hand, written in the margin of a volume of his "Sybilline Leaves," which—after his life-long habit—he has enriched by manuscript annotations. The poem, beside which it is inscribed, is entitled, "The Lime-Tree

\* Mr. Richard Welch, of Reading, editor of the *Berkshire Chronicle*—one of the ablest productions of the Conservative Periodical Press.

Bower my Prison," composed by the poet in June, 1796, when Charles and Mary Lamb, who were visiting at his cottage near Bristol, had left him for a walk, which an accidental lameness prevented him from sharing. The visitors are not indicated by the poem, except that Charles is designated by the epithet, against which he jestingly remonstrated, as "gentle-hearted Charles;" and is represented as "winning his way, with sad and patient soul, through evil and pain, and strange calamity." Against the title is written as follows:—

CH. & MARY LAMB,

dear to my heart, yea,

as it were, *my heart*,

S. T. C. Æt. 63. 1834.

1797

1834.

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37 years!

This memorandum, which is penned with remarkable neatness, must have been made in Coleridge's last illness, as he suffered acutely for several months before he died, in July of this same year, 1834. What a space did that thirty-seven years of fond regard for the brother and sister occupy in a mind like Coleridge's, peopled with

immortal thoughts which might multiply in the true time, dialled in heaven, its minutes into years !

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These friends of Lamb's whom I have ventured to sketch in companionship with him, and Southey also, whom I only once saw, are all gone ;—and others of less note in the world's eye have followed them. Among those of the old set who are gone, is Manning, perhaps, next to Coleridge, the dearest of them, whom Lamb used to speak of as marvellous in a *tête-à-tête*, but who, in company, seemed only a courteous gentleman, more disposed to listen than to talk. In good old age, departed Admiral Burney, frank-hearted voyager with Captain Cook round the world, who seemed to unite our society with the circle over which Dr. Johnson reigned ; who used to tell of school-days under the tutelage of Eugene Aram ; how he remembered the gentle usher pacing the playground, arm-in-arm with some one of the elder boys, and seeking relief from the unsuspected burthen of his conscience by talking of strange murders, and how he, a child, had shuddered at the handcuffs on his teacher's hands when taken away in

the post-chaise to prison;—the Admiral being himself the centre of a little circle which his sister, the famous authoress of “*Evelina*,” “*Cecilia*,” and “*Camilla*,” sometimes graced. John Lamb, the jovial and burly, who dared to argue with Hazlitt on questions of art; Barron Field, who with veneration enough to feel all the despised greatness of Wordsworth, had a sparkling vivacity, and, connected with Lamb by the link of Christ’s Hospital associations, shared largely in his regard; Rickman, the sturdiest of jovial companions, severe in the discipline of whist as at the table of the House of Commons, of which he was the principal clerk; and Alsager, so calm, so bland, so considerate—all are gone. These were all Temple-guests—friends of Lamb’s early days; but the companions of a later time, who first met in Great Russell Street, or Dalston, or Islington, or Enfield, have been woefully thinned: Allan Cunningham, stalwart of form and stout of heart and verse, a ruder Burns; Cary, Lamb’s “pleasantest of clergymen,” whose sweetness of disposition and manner would have prevented a stranger from guessing that he was the poet who had rendered the adamant poetry of Dante into English

with kindred power ; Hood, so grave and sad and silent, that you were astonished to recognise in him the outpourer of a thousand wild fancies, the detector of the inmost springs of pathos, and the powerful vindicator of poverty and toil before the hearts of the prosperous ; the Reverend Edward Irving, who, after fulfilling an old prophecy he made in Scotland to Hazlitt that he would astonish and shake the world by his preaching, sat humbly at the feet of Coleridge to listen to wisdom,—all are gone ; the forms of others associated with Lamb's circle by more accidental links (also dead) come thronging on the memory from the mist of years—Alas ; it is easier to count those that are left of the old familiar faces !

The story of the lives of Charles and Mary Lamb is now told ; nothing more remains to be learned respecting it. The known collateral branches of their stock are extinct, and their upward pedigree lost in those humble tracks on which the steps of Time leave so light an impress, that the dust of a few years obliterates all trace, and affords no clue to search collaterally for surviving relatives. The world has, therefore, all the materials for judging of them which can be

possessed by those, who, not remembering the delightful peculiarities of their daily manners, can only form imperfect ideas of what they were. Before bidding them a last adieu, we may be permitted to linger a little longer to survey their characters by the new and solemn lights which are now, for the first time, fully cast upon them.

Except to the few who were acquainted with the tragical occurrences of Lamb's early life, some of his peculiarities seemed strange—to be forgiven, indeed, to the excellencies of his nature, and the delicacy of his genius—but still, in themselves, as much to be wondered at as deplored. The sweetness of his character, breathed through his writings, was felt even by strangers; but its heroic aspect was unguessed, even by many of his friends. Let them now consider it, and ask if the annals of self-sacrifice can show anything in human action and endurance, more lovely than its self-devotion exhibits! It was not merely that he saw (which his elder brother cannot be blamed for not immediately perceiving) through the ensanguined cloud of misfortune which had fallen upon his family, the unstained excellence of his sister, whose madness had caused it; that he was ready to take her to

his own home with reverential affection, and cherish her through life ; that he gave up, for her sake, all meaner and more selfish love, and all the hopes which youth blends with the passion which disturbs and ennobles it ; not even that he did all this cheerfully, and without pluming himself upon his brotherly nobleness as a virtue, or seeking to repay himself (as some uneasy martyrs do) by small instalments of long repining,—but that he carried the spirit of the hour in which he first knew and took his course, to his last. So far from thinking that his sacrifice of youth and love to his sister, gave him a licence to follow his own caprice at the expense of her feelings, even in the lightest matters, he always wrote and spoke of her as his wiser self ; his generous benefactress, of whose protecting care he was scarcely worthy. How his pen almost grew wanton in her praise, even when she was a prisoner in the Asylum after the fatal attack of lunacy, his letters of the time to Coleridge show ; but that might have been a mere temporary exaltation—the attendant fervour of a great exigency and a great resolution. It was not so ; nine years afterwards (1805), in a letter to Miss Wordsworth, he thus dilates on his

sister's excellencies, and exaggerates his own frailties :—

“To say all that I know of her would be more than I think anybody could believe or even understand; and when I hope to have her well again with me, it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her; for I can conceal nothing that I do from her. She is older, and wiser, and better than I, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death, heaven and hell, with me. She lives but for me; and I know I have been wasting and teasing her life for five years past incessantly with my cursed ways of going on. But even in this upbraiding of myself, I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it ‘was a noble trade.’”

Let it also be remembered that this devotion of the entire nature was not exercised merely in the consciousness of a past tragedy; but during the frequent recurrences of the calamity which caused it, and the constant apprehension of its terrors;

and this for a large portion of life, in poor lodgings, where the brother and sister were, or fancied themselves, "marked people;" where from an income incapable of meeting the expense of the sorrow without sedulous privations, he contrived to hoard, not for holiday enjoyment, or future solace, but to provide for expected distress. Of the misery attendant on this anticipation, aggravated by jealous fears lest some imprudence or error of his own should have hastened the inevitable evil, we have a glimpse in the letter to Miss Wordsworth above quoted, and which seems to have been written in reply to one which that excellent lady had addressed to Miss Lamb, and which had fallen into the brother's care during one of her sad absences.

"Your kind letter has not been thrown away, but poor Mary, to whom it is addressed, cannot yet relish it. She has been attacked by one of her severe illnesses, and is at present from home. Last Monday week was the day she left me; and I hope I may calculate upon having her again in a month or little more. I am rather afraid late hours have, in this case, contributed to her indisposition.

But when she begins to discover symptoms of approaching illness, it is not easy to say what is best to do. Being by ourselves is bad, and going out is bad. I get so irritable and wretched with fear, that I constantly hasten on the disorder. You cannot conceive the misery of such a foresight. I am sure that, for the week before she left me, I was little better than light-headed. I now am calm, but sadly taken down and flat. I have every reason to suppose that this illness, like all her former ones, will be but temporary. But I cannot always feel so. Meantime she is dead to me !”

The constant impendency of this giant sorrow saddened to “the Lambs” even their holidays ; as the journey which they both regarded as the relief and charm of the year was frequently followed by a seizure ; and, when they ventured to take it, a strait-waistcoat, carefully packed by Miss Lamb herself, was their constant companion. Sad experience, at last, induced the abandonment of the annual excursion, and Lamb was contented with walks in and near London, during the interval of labour. Miss Lamb experienced, and full well understood premonitory symptoms of the

attack, in restlessness, low fever, and the inability to sleep; and, as gently as possible, prepared her brother for the duty he must soon perform; and thus, unless he could stave off the terrible separation till Sunday, obliged him to ask leave of absence from the office as if for a day's pleasure—a bitter mockery! On one occasion Mr. Charles Lloyd met them, slowly pacing together a little footpath in Hoxton fields, both weeping bitterly, and found on joining them, that they were taking their solemn way to the accustomed Asylum!

Will any one, acquainted with these secret passages of Lamb's history, wonder that, with a strong physical inclination for the stimulus and support of strong drinks—which man is framed moderately to rejoice in—he should snatch some wild pleasure “between the acts” (as he called them) “of his distressful drama,” and that, still more, during the loneliness of the solitude created by his sister's absences, he should obtain the solace of an hour's feverish dream? That, notwithstanding that frailty, he performed the duties of his hard lot with exemplary steadiness and discretion is indeed wonderful—especially when it is recollected that he had himself been visited, when in the dawn of

manhood, with his sister's malady, the seeds of which were doubtless in his frame. While that natural predisposition may explain some occasional flightiness of expression on serious matters, fruit of some wayward fancy, which flitted through his brain, without disturbing his constant reason or reaching his heart, and some little extravagances of fitful mirth, how does it heighten the moral courage by which the disease was controlled and the severest duties performed ! Never surely was there a more striking example of the power of a virtuous, rather say, of a pious, wish to conquer the fiery suggestions of latent insanity than that presented by Lamb's history. Nervous, tremulous, as he seemed—so slight of frame that he looked only fit for the most placid fortune—when the dismal emergencies which chequered his life arose, he acted with as much promptitude and vigour as if he had never penned a stanza nor taken a glass too much, or was strung with herculean sinews. None of those temptations, in which misery is the most potent, to hazard a lavish expenditure for an enjoyment to be secured against fate and fortune, ever tempted him to exceed his income, when scantiest, by a shilling. He had always a reserve

for poor Mary's periods of seclusion, and something in hand besides for a friend in need;—and on his retirement from the India House, he had amassed, by annual savings, a sufficient sum (invested, after the prudent and classical taste of Lord Stowell, in “the elegant simplicity of the Three per Cents.”) to secure comfort to Miss Lamb, when his pension should cease with him, even if the India Company, his great employers, had not acted nobly by the memory of their inspired clerk—as they did—and gave her the annuity to which a wife would have been entitled—but of which he could not feel assured. Living among literary men, some less distinguished and less discreet than those whom we have mentioned, he was constantly importuned to relieve distresses which an improvident speculation in literature produces, and which the recklessness attendant on the empty vanity of self-exaggerated talent renders desperate and merciless;—and to the importunities of such hopeless petitioners he gave too largely—though he used sometimes express a painful sense that he was diminishing his own store without conferring any real benefit. “Heaven,” he used to say, “does not owe me

sixpence for all I have given, or lent (as they call it) to such importunity; I only gave it because I could not bear to refuse it; and I have done good by my weakness." On the other hand, he used to seek out occasions of devoting a part of his surplus to those of his friends whom he believed it would really serve, and almost forced loans, or gifts in the disguise of loans, upon them. If he thought one, in such a position, would be the happier for 50*l.* or 100*l.*, he would carefully procure a note for the sum, and, perhaps, for days before he might meet the object of his friendly purpose, keep the note in his waistcoat pocket, burning in it to be produced, and, when the occasion arrived—"in the sweet of the night"—he would crumple it up in his hand and stammer out his difficulty of disposing of a little money; "I don't know what to do with it—pray take it—pray use it—you will do me a kindness if you will"—he would say; and it was hard to disoblige him! Let any one who has been induced to regard Lamb as a poor, slight, excitable, and excited being, consider that such acts as these were not infrequent—that he exercised hospitality of a substantial kind, without stint, all his life—that he spared no expense for the comfort

of his sister, *there* only lavish—and that he died leaving sufficient to accomplish all his wishes for survivors—and think what the sturdy quality of his goodness must have been amidst all the heart-aches and head-aches of his life—and ask the virtue which has been supported by strong nerves, whether it has often produced any good to match it?

The influence of the events now disclosed may be traced in the development and direction of Lamb's faculties and tastes, and in the wild contrasts of expression which sometimes startled strangers. The literary preferences disclosed in his early letters, are often inclined to the superficial in poetry and thought—the theology of Priestly, though embraced with pious earnestness—the “divine chit-chat” of Cowper—the melodious sadness of Bowles; and his own style, breathing a graceful and modest sweetness, is without any decided character. But by the terrible realities of his experience, he was turned to seek a kindred interest in the “sterner stuff” of old tragedy—to catastrophes more fearful even than his own—to the aspects of “pale passion”—to shapes of heroic daring and more heroic suffering—to the agonising contests of opposing

affections, and the victories of the soul over calamity and death, which the old English drama discloses, and in the contemplation of which he saw his own suffering nature at once mirrored and exalted. Thus, instead of admiring, as he once admired, Rowe and Otway, even Massinger seemed too declamatory to satisfy him; in Ford, Decker, Marlowe and Webster, he found the most awful struggles of affection, and the "sad embroidery" of fancy-streaked grief, and expressed his kindred feelings in those little quintessences of criticism which are appended to the noblest scenes in his "Specimens;" and, seeking amidst the sunnier and more varied world of Shakspeare for the profoundest and most earnest passion developed there, obtained that marvellous insight into the soul of Lear which gives to his presentment of its riches almost the character of creation. On the other hand, it was congenial pastime with him to revel in the opposite excellencies of Beaumont and Fletcher, who changed the domain of tragedy into fairyland; turned all its terror and its sorrow "to favour and to prettiness;" shed the rainbow hues of sportive fancy with equal hand among tyrants and victims, the devoted and the faithless, suffering

and joy; represented the beauty of goodness as a happy accident, vice as a wayward aberration, and invoked the remorse of a moment to change them as with a harlequin's wand; unrealised the terrible, and left "nothing serious in mortality," but reduced the struggle of life to a glittering and heroic game to be played splendidly out, and quitted without a sigh. But neither Lamb's own secret griefs, nor the tastes, which they nurtured, ever shook his faith in the requisitions of duty, or induced him to dally with that moral paradox to which near acquaintance with the great errors of mighty natures is sometimes a temptation. Never, either in writing or in speech did he purposely confound good with evil. For the new theories of morals which gleamed out in the conversation of some of his friends, he had no sympathy; and, though in his boundless indulgence to the perversities and faults of those whom long familiarity had endeared to him, he did not suffer their frailties to impair his attachment to the individuals, he never palliated the frailties themselves; still less did he emblazon them as virtues.

No one, acquainted with Lamb's story, will wonder at the eccentric wildness of his mirth—his

violent changes from the serious to the farcical—the sudden reliefs of the “heat-oppressed brain,” and heart weighed down by the sense of ever-impending sorrow. His whim, however, almost always bordered on wisdom. It was justly said of him by Hazlitt, “his serious conversation, like his serious writing, is his best. No one ever stammered out such fine, piquant, deep, eloquent things in half-a-dozen half sentences; his jests scald like tears, and he probes a question with a play on words.”

Although Lamb's conversation vibrated between the intense and the grotesque, his writings are replete with quiet pictures of the humbler scenery of middle life, touched with a graceful and loving hand. We may trace in them the experience of a nature bred up in slender circumstances, but imbued with a certain innate spirit of gentility suggesting a respect for all its moderate appliances and unambitious pleasures. The same spirit pervaded all his own domestic arrangements, so that the intensity of his affliction was ameliorated by as much comfort as satisfaction in the outward furniture of life can give to slender fortune.

The most important light, however, shed on

Lamb's intellectual life by a knowledge of his true history, is that which elucidates the change from vivid religious impressions, manifested in his earlier letters, to an apparent indifference towards immortal interests and celestial relations, which he confesses in a letter to Mr. Walter Wilson.\* The truth is, not that he became an unbeliever, or even a sceptic, but that the peculiar disasters in which he was plunged, and the tendency of his nature to seek immediate solaces, induced an habitual reluctance to look boldly out into futurity. That conjugal love, which anticipates with far-looking eye prolonged existence in posterity, was denied to his self-sacrifice ; irksome labour wearied out the heart of his days ; and over his small household, Madness, like Death in the vision of Milton, continually " shook its dart," and only, at the best, " delayed to strike." Not daring to look onward, even for a little month, he acquired the habitual sense of living entirely in the present ; enjoying with tremulous zest the security of the moment, and making some genial, but sad, amends for the want of all the perspective of life, by cleaving, with fondness, to its nearest objects, and becoming

\* Vol. i., p. 133.

attached to them, even when least interesting in themselves.

This perpetual grasping at transient relief from the minute and vivid present, associated Lamb's affections intimately and closely with the small details of daily existence; these became to him the "jutting frieze" and "coigne of vantage" in which his home-bred fany "made its bed and procreant cradle;" these became imbued with his thoughts, and echoed back to him old feelings and old loves, till his inmost soul shivered at the prospect of being finally wrenched from them. Enthralled thus in the prison of an earthly home, he became perplexed and bewildered at the idea of an existence, which, though holier and happier, would doubtless be entirely different from that to which he was bound by so many delicate films of custom. "Ah!" he would say, "we shall have none of these little passages of this life hereafter—none of our little quarrels and makings-up—no questionings about sixpence at whist;" and, thus repelled, he clung more closely to "the bright minutes" which he strung "on the thread of keen domestic anguish!" It is this intense feeling of the "nice regards of flesh and blood;" this dwelling in

petty felicities ; which makes us, apart from religious fears,unwilling to die. Small associations make death terrible, because we know, that parting with this life, we part from their company ; whereas great thoughts make death less fearful, because we feel that they will be our companions in all worlds, and link our future to our present being in all ages. Such thoughts assuredly were not dead in a heart like Lamb's ; they were only veiled by the nearer presences of familiar objects, and sometimes, perhaps, bursting in upon him in all their majesty, produced those startling references to sacred things, in which, though not to be quoted with approval, there was no profaneness, but rather a wayward, fitful, disturbed piety. If, indeed, when borne beyond the present, he sought to linger in the past ; to detect among the dust and cobwebs of antiquity, beauty which had lurked there from old time, than to "rest and expatiate in a life to come," no anti-christian sentiment spread its chillness over his spirit. The shrinking into mortal life was but the weakness of a nature which shed the sweetness of the religion of its youth through the sorrows and the snatches of enjoyment which crowded his after years, and only feebly perceived

its final glories, which, we may humbly hope, its immortal part is now enjoying.

Shortly before his death, Lamb had borrowed of Mr. Cary, Phillips's "*Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum*," which when returned by Mr. Moxon, after the event, was found with the leaf folded down at the account of Sir Philip Sydney. Its receipt was acknowledged by the following lines:—

"So should it be, my gentle friend ;  
Thy leaf last closed at Sydney's end.  
Thou too, like Sydney, wouldst have given  
The water, thirsting and near heaven ;  
Nay were it wine, fill'd to the brim,  
Thou hadst look'd hard, but given, like him.

And art thou mingled then among  
Those famous sons of ancient song ?  
And do they gather round, and praise  
Thy relish of their nobler lays ?  
Waxing in mirth to hear thee tell  
With what strange mortals thou didst dwell ;  
At thy quaint sallies more delighted,  
Than any's long among them lighted !

'Tis done : and thou hast join'd a crew,  
To whom thy soul was justly due ;  
And yet I think, where'er thou be,  
They'll scarcely love thee more than we."\*

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\* These lines, characteristic both of the writer and the subject,

Little could any one, observing Miss Lamb in the habitual serenity of her demeanour, guess the calamity in which she had partaken, or the malady which frightfully chequered her life. From Mr. Lloyd, who, although saddened by impending delusion, was always found accurate in his recollection of long past events and conversations, I learned that she had described herself, on her recovery from the fatal attack, as having experienced, while it was subsiding, such a conviction, that she was absolved in heaven from all taint of the deed in which she had been the agent—such an assurance, that it was a dispensation of Providence for good, though so terrible—such a sense, that her mother knew her entire innocence, and shed down blessings upon her, as though she had seen the reconciliation in solemn vision—that she was not sorely afflicted by the recollection. It was as if the old Greek notion, of the necessity for the unconscious shedder of blood, else polluted though guiltless, to pass through a religious purification,

are copied from the Memoir of the translator of Dante, by his son, the Rev. Henry Cary, which, enriched by many interesting memorials of contemporaries, presents as valuable a picture of rare ability and excellence as ever was traced by the fine observation of filial love.

had, in her case, been happily accomplished ; so that, not only was she without remorse, but without other sorrow than attends on the death of an infirm parent in a good old age. She never shrank from alluding to her mother, when any topic connected with her own youth made such a reference, in ordinary respects, natural ; but spoke of her as though no fearful remembrance was associated with the image ; so that some of her most intimate friends who knew of the disaster, believed that she had never become aware of her own share in its horrors. It is still more singular that, in the wanderings of her insanity, amidst all the vast throngs of imagery she presented of her early days, this picture never recurred, or, if ever, not associated with shapes of terror.

Miss Lamb would have been remarkable for the sweetness of her disposition, the clearness of her understanding, and the gentle wisdom of all her acts and words, even if these qualities had not been presented in marvellous contrast with the distraction under which she suffered for weeks, latterly for months, in every year. There was no tinge of insanity discernible in her manner to the most observant eye ; not even in those distressful periods

when the premonitory symptoms had apprised her of its approach, and she was making preparations for seclusion. In all its essential sweetness, her character was like her brother's; while, by a temper more placid, a spirit of enjoyment more serene, she was enabled to guide, to counsel, to cheer him; and to protect him on the verge of the mysterious calamity, from the depths of which she rose so often unruffled to his side. To a friend in any difficulty she was the most comfortable of advisers, the wisest of consolers. Hazlitt used to say, that he never met with a woman who could reason, and had met with only one thoroughly reasonable—the sole exception being Mary Lamb. She did not wish, however, to be made an exception, to a general disparagement of her sex; for in all her thoughts and feelings she was most womanly—keeping, under even undue subordination, to her notion of a woman's province, intellect of rare excellence, which flashed out when the restraints of gentle habit and humble manner were withdrawn by the terrible force of disease. Though her conversation in sanity was never marked by smartness or repartee; seldom rising beyond that of a sensible quiet gentlewoman appreciating and enjoying the

talents of her friends, it was otherwise in her madness. Lamb, in his letter to a female friend, announcing his determination to be entirely with her, speaks of her pouring out memories of all the events and persons of her younger days;—but he does not mention, what I am able from repeated experiences to add, that her ramblings often sparkled with brilliant description and shattered beauty. She would fancy herself in the days of Queen Anne or George the First; and describe the brocaded dames and courtly manners, as though she had been bred among them, in the best style of the old comedy. It was all broken and disjointed, so that the hearer could remember little of her discourse; but the fragments were like the jewelled speeches of Congreve, only shaken from their setting. There was sometimes even a vein of crazy logic running through them, associating things essentially most dissimilar, but connecting them by a verbal association in strange order. As a mere physical instance of deranged intellect, her condition was, I believe, extraordinary; it was as if the finest elements of mind had been shaken into fantastic combinations like those of a kaleidoscope;—but not for the purpose of exhibiting a curious

phenomenon of mental aberration are the aspects of her insanity unveiled, but to illustrate the moral force of gentleness by which the faculties that thus sparkled when restraining wisdom was withdrawn, were subjected to its sway, in her periods of reason.

The following letter from Miss Lamb to Miss Wordsworth, on one of the chief external events of Lamb's history, the removal from the Temple to Covent Garden, will illustrate the cordial and womanly strain of her observation on the occurrences of daily life, and afford a good idea of her habitual conversation among her friends.

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

Your kind letter has given us very great pleasure, the sight of your handwriting was a most welcome surprise to us. We have heard good tidings of you by all our friends who were so fortunate as to visit you this summer, and rejoice to see it confirmed by yourself. You have quite the advantage, in volunteering a letter; there is no merit in replying to so welcome a stranger.

We have left the Temple. I think you will be

sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with thinking of you at Rydal Mount, as when I could connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty, and out of repair, and the inconveniences of living in chambers became every year more irksome, and so, at last, we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place, that so long had sheltered us, and here we are, living at a brazier's shop, No. 20 in Russell Street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle; Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our front, and Covent Garden from our back windows. The hubbub of the carriages returning from the play does not annoy me in the least; strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window, and listening to the calling up of the carriages, and the squabbles of the coachmen and linkboys. It is the oddest scene to look down upon; I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a cheerful place, or I should have many misgivings about leaving the Temple. I look forward with great pleasure to the prospect of seeing my good friend, Miss Hutchinson. I wish Rydal Mount, with all its inhabitants enclosed,

were to be transplanted with her, and to remain stationary in the midst of Covent Garden.

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Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book, they were sent home yesterday, and now that I have them altogether, and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles, I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room, which has been a great mortification to me—in vain I tried to console myself with looking at our new chairs and carpets, for we have got new chairs, and carpets covering all over our two sitting-rooms; I missed my old friends, and could not be comforted—then I would resolve to learn to look out of the window, a habit I never could attain in my life, and I have given it up as a thing quite impracticable—yet when I was at Brighton, last summer, the first week I never took my eyes off from the sea, not even to look in a book: I had not seen the sea for sixteen years. Mrs. M——, who was with us, kept her liking, and continued her seat in the window till the very last, while Charles and I played truants, and wandered among the hills, which we magnified into little mountains, and *almost as good as* Westmoreland

scenery: certainly we made discoveries of many pleasant walks, which few of the Brighton visitors have ever dreamed of—for like as is the case in the neighbourhood of London, after the first two or three miles we were sure to find ourselves in a perfect solitude. I hope we shall meet before the walking faculties of either of us fail; you say you can walk fifteen miles with ease, that is exactly my stint, and more fatigues me; four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between, was all Mrs. M—— could accomplish.

God bless you and yours. Love to all and each one.

I am ever yours most affectionately,

M. LAMB.

Of that deeper vein of sentiment in Mary Lamb, seldom revealed, the following passages, from a letter to the same lady, referring to the death of a brother of her beloved correspondent, may be offered as a companion specimen.

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

I thank you, my kind friend, for your most comfortable letter; till I saw your own handwriting, I could not persuade myself that I should do well to write to you, though I have often attempted it; but I always left off, dissatisfied with what I had written, and feeling that I was doing an improper thing to intrude upon your sorrow. I wished to tell you that you would one day feel the kind of peaceful state of mind and sweet memory of the dead, which you so happily describe, as now almost begun; but I felt that it was improper, and most grating to the feelings of the afflicted, to say to them that the memory of their affection would in time become a constant part, not only of their dream, but of their most wakeful sense of happiness. That you would see every object with, and through your lost brother, and that that would at last become a real and everlasting source of comfort to you, I felt, and well knew, from my own experience in sorrow; but till you yourself began to feel this, I did not dare tell you so; but I send you some poor lines, which I wrote

under this conviction of mind, and before I heard Coleridge was returning home. I will transcribe them now, before I finish my letter, lest a false shame prevent me then, for I know they are much worse than they ought to be, written, as they were, with strong feeling, and on such a subject, every line seems to me to be borrowed, but I had no better way of expressing my thoughts, and I never have the power of altering or amending anything I have once laid aside with dissatisfaction.

Why is he wandering on the sea !—  
Coleridge should now with Wordsworth be.  
By slow degrees he 'd steal away  
Their woe, and gently bring a ray  
(So happily he 'd time relief,)  
Of comfort from their very grief.  
He 'd tell them that their brother dead,  
When years have passed o'er their head,  
Will be remembered with such holy,  
True, and perfect melancholy,  
That ever this lost brother John  
Will be their heart's companion.  
His voice they 'll always hear,  
His face they 'll always see ;  
There 's nought in life so sweet  
As such a memory.

The excellence of Mary Lamb's nature was happily developed in her portion of those books for children—"wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best,"—which she wrote in conjunction with her brother, the "Poetry for Children," the "Fables from Shakspeare," and "Mrs. Leicester's School." How different from the stony nutriment provided for those delicate, apprehensive, affectionate creatures, in the utilitarian books, which starve their little hearts, and stuff their little heads with shallow science, and impertinent facts, and selfish morals! One verse, which she did not print—the conclusion of a little poem supposed to be expressed in a letter by the son of a family who, when expecting the return of its father from sea, received news of his death,—recited by her to Mr. Martin Burney, and retained in his fond recollection, may afford a concluding example of the healthful wisdom of her lessons:—

"I can no longer feign to be  
A thoughtless child in infancy;  
I tried to write like young Marie,  
But I am James, her brother;  
And I can feel—but she's too young—  
Yet blessings on her prattling tongue,  
She sweetly soothes my mother."

Contrary to Lamb's expectation, who feared (as also his friends feared with him) the desolation of his own survivorship, which the difference of age rendered probable, Miss Lamb survived him for nearly eleven years. When he died, she was mercifully in a state of partial estrangement, which, while it did not wholly obscure her mind, deadened her feelings, so that as she gradually regained her perfect senses, she felt as gradually the full force of the blow, and was the better able calmly to bear it. For awhile she declined the importunities of her friends that she would leave Edmonton for a residence nearer London, where they might more frequently visit her. *He* was there, asleep in the old churchyard, beneath the turf near which they had stood together, and had selected for a resting-place; to this spot she used, when well, to stroll out mournfully in the evening, and to this spot she would contrive to lead any friend who came in the summer evenings to drink tea and went out with her afterwards for a walk.\* At length, as her illness became more frequent, and her frame much weaker,

\* The following Sonnet, by Mr. Moxon, written at this period of tranquil sadness in Miss Lamb's life, so beautifully embodies the reverential love with which the sleeping and the mourning were regarded by one of their nearest friends, that I gratify myself by

she was induced to take up her abode under genial care, at a pleasant house in St. John's Wood, where she was surrounded by the old books and prints, and was frequently visited by her reduced number of surviving friends. Repeated attacks of her malady weakened her mind, but she retained to the last her sweetness of disposition unimpaired, and gently sunk into death on the 20th May, 1847.

A few survivors of the old circle, now sadly thinned, attended her remains to the spot in Edmonton churchyard, where they were laid

extracting it from the charming little volume of his Sonnets, which it adorns :—

Here sleeps, beneath this bank, where daisies grow,  
The kindest sprite earth holds within her breast ;  
In such a spot I would this frame should rest,  
When I to join my friend far hence shall go.  
His only mate is now the minstrel lark,  
Who chaunts her morning music o'er his bed,  
Save she who comes each evening, ere the bark  
Of watch-dog gathers drowsy folds, to shed  
A sister's tears. Kind Heaven, upon her head,  
Do thou in dove-like guise thy spirit pour,  
And in her aged path some flowerets spread  
Of earthly joy, should Time for her in store  
Have weary days and nights, ere she shall greet  
Him whom she longs in Paradise to meet.

above those of her brother. With them was one friend of later days—but who had become to Lamb as one of his oldest companions, and for whom Miss Lamb cherished a strong regard—Mr. John Forster, the author of “The Life of Goldsmith,” in which Lamb would have rejoiced, as written in a spirit congenial with his own. In accordance with Lamb’s own feeling, so far as it could be gathered from his expressions on a subject to which he did not often, or willingly, refer, he had been interred in a deep grave, simply dug, and wattled round, but without any affectation of stone or brickwork to keep the human dust from its kindred earth. So dry, however, is the soil of the quiet churchyard that the excavated earth left perfect walls of stiff clay, and permitted us just to catch a glimpse of the still untarnished edges of the coffin in which all the mortal part of one of the most delightful persons who ever lived was contained, and on which the remains of her he had loved with love, “passing the love of woman,” were henceforth to rest;—the last glances we shall ever have even of that covering;—concealed from us as we parted, by the coffin of the sister. We felt, I believe after a moment’s strange shuddering, that the re-union

was well accomplished; and although the true-hearted son of Admiral Burney, who had known and loved the pair we quitted, from a child, and who had been among the dearest objects of existence to him, refused to be comforted,—even he will now join the scanty remnant of their friends in the softened remembrance that “they were lovely in their lives,” and own with them the consolation of adding, at last, “that in death they are not divided!”

THE END.

LONDON:

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.



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